

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

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ELIZABETH
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Mark Abley was the winner of the 1979 Fiona Mee prize for literary journalism in Canada. Vernon Bogdanor is the author of *Midi-Party Politics and the Constitution*, 1983. Craig Brown's *The Marsh Marlowe Letters* has recently been published. Rupert Christiansen's *Primo Domino* was published earlier this year. Peter Clarke's *Liberals and Social Democrats* was published in 1981. Arthur C. Danto's most recent book is *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, 1981. D. J. Enright is the editor of *The Oxford Book of Death*, 1983. Robert Fothergill is the author of *Private Chronicles: A study of English diaries*, 1974. Martin Gilbert's books include *The Jews of Hope: The plight of Soviet Jewry today*, which appeared earlier this year. Jane Grigson's cookery books include *Good Things*, 1971. Peter Hainworth is a Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Julie Hankey's theatre-historical edition of *Richard III* was published in 1981. Christopher Hitchens is Washington columnist for the *Nation*. Hermione Lee is the author of *The Novels of Virginia Woolf*, 1977. G. McCarthy is lecturer in Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of Birmingham. Laethan MacKinnon's *Elliot, Auden, Lowell: Aspects of the Baudelairean inheritance* was published earlier this year.

Wilfrid Mellers's *A Darker Shade of Pale: A backdrop to Bob Dylan* appeared earlier this year. Bernard Ostry is Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, Toronto. Richard Pankhurst is currently Librarian of the Royal Asiatic Society. Sir Brian Pippard is the author of *The Physics of Vibration, Volumes 1 and 2*, published in 1978 and 1980 respectively. Harvey Pitcher's *The Sinhs of Moscow* was published earlier this year. B. S. Prawer is President of the British Comparative Literature Association. Graham Reynolds's *The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable* will be reviewed shortly in the TLS. Pat Rogers is completing a biography of Sir Joshua Reynolds. David Sexton is working on a study of Nabokov. Poy Simmonds's cartoons appear in the *Guardian*. C. H. Blom's *Collected Poems* were reviewed in the TLS of October 26. Robert Snell is the author of *Théophile Gautier: A Romantic critic of the visual arts*, 1982. Paul Snowden is a Fellow of Exeter College Oxford. Rachel Trickett is Principal of St Hugh's College, Oxford. E. S. Turner's most recent book, *An ABC of Nostalgia*, appeared in September. Jeremy Waldron is a lecturer in Political Theory at the University of Edinburgh.

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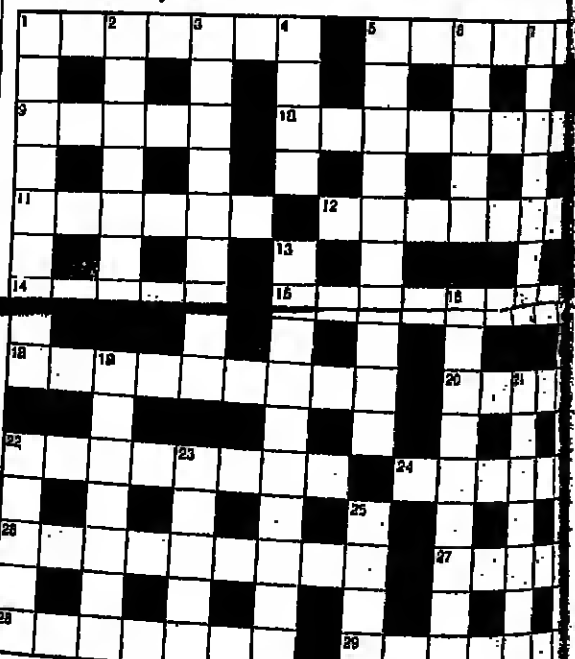
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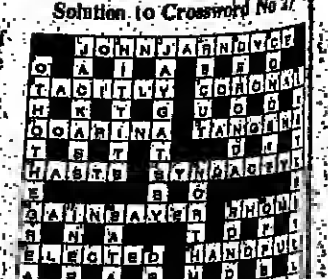
TLS Crossword No 28

A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct solution on January 4. Answers should be addressed to TLS Crossword, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. Tel: 01-253 3000. The crossword is set by Mrs B. Maggs, Flat 4, 17 York Road, Surrey SM2 6EZ.



- Across**
- 1 "I think continually..." he began, but he's a visitor. (7)
 - 5 Milton's hell for a poor teacher. (7)
 - 9 Antiquary, aged and, yes, omphal. (5)
 - 10 Arrowmilt's daughter heard to give n-giggle. (9)
 - 11 Honds in Stevenson country. (6)
 - 12 Campbell's Mrs Woldegrave, et al. (8)
 - 14 Appointment to test Good-man. (5)
 - 15 Play-girl who never planned up her hair with prose. (9)
 - 18 Noted woman rebelling at control. (9)
 - 20 Edward Hegerup, Essex opener in cricket. (5)
 - 22 He's gone and no traces may be found. (8)
 - 24 Job-to follow her. She chose Felix. (6)
 - 26 Drunk, neither tea nor tar-water could do this. (9)
 - 27 Item unfinished question being one from Baghdad. (5)
 - 28 Name what Collins once didn't do. (7)
 - 29 Author of "The Necessity of Atheism" — it's hardback, we hear. (7)
- Down**
- 1 Dunc-like in philosophy, confused Stoid not wholly able to take stick. (9)
 - 2 And awsome bella they were to me! That in the dark rang (Huglow) (7)
 - 3 Spectator observed him at Christmas for his very plentifully of meadum portage! (9)
 - 4 City's loveless lover. (6)
 - 5 She broke off a saveloy moment (see Janel) (4)
 - 6 Vortice was secretly pot-rying inside informative. (9)
 - 7 Count's dual car-crash. (7)
 - 8 The old list, one a feminine pack. (5)
 - 13 Fielding's last novel, unfinished, all value, could better. (10)
 - 16 Hippo man's month in Oct. (9)
 - 17 "The Great White Felt" — me from pirates, she's addressing Paul (5)
 - 19 Convinces, sheriff's officer the Yard. (7)
 - 21 No Jonah, but he also rejected by the Whale. (7)
 - 22 Librettist of *Borley* — wanted to know her: abouts. (5)
 - 23 R.S. historian in the male. (5)
 - 25 Presidential plaything — seist (4)

Splitting to Crossword No 27



TLS

The Times Literary Supplement

FRIDAY 28 DECEMBER 1984 No 4,265 70p

Anthony Burgess: writers and sounds

Peter Jay's market socialism

'Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae'

Michael Tippett and the limits of tonality

Public punishment in the West

J. G. A. Pocock: Interregnum radicals after 1660

The Prussian State Library today



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John C. 116

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Cover picture

Caterina della Santa'n "trompe l'oeil with drawings, broadsheets and embossed medals and coins" (1789) was sold for £1,300 at Christie's on December 13 in their sale of "Important Old Master Drawings".

When to lend an ear

Anthony Burgess

RAYMOND CHAPMAN
The Treatment of Sounds in Language and Literature
262pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £19.50.
0 631 13657 6

The late C. P. Snow inveighed extensively against the ignorance of the sciences displayed by men of letters who, unlike himself, had received no scientific training, but he never showed much interest in the science that is most pertinent to the aesthetic exploitation of words. In this respect he was, like many other of his fellow practitioners in fiction, content to acknowledge the Lang-Lit gap and do nothing to close it. In his final novel he described a character as leaving the "g" out of her present participles, instead of saying that she substituted an alveolar nasal for a velar one. Such exactitude of linguistic description he would have considered not merely pedantic but in bad taste, like presenting the sexual act in terms of clitoral stimulation and phallic engorgement. Nuclear biology was different.

J. B. Priestley had no scientific pretensions, so he can get away with making a character add an "h" after an "s" instead of palatalizing his unvoiced alveolar fricatives. But when Ivor Brown, in a book on Shakespeare, wrote feelingly about "the magic of the letter r", one was perhaps right to feel uneasy. A discussion of prosodic effects has to do with sounds, not letters, but the division between the linguistic and literary disciplines once made it a matter of pride for a literary scholar not to know much about sounds. This still goes on. There are Shakespearean scholars less amateurish than the late Ivor Brown who know nothing about Elizabethan pronunciation and are glad to know nothing. This means that they can get nothing out of Hamlet's pun on "mouse-trap" and "tropically" or, in *Henry IV*, reasons being as plentiful as blackberries. The situation grows worse as we travel back to Chaucer and, when we arrive at *Beowulf*, literature has to be handed over to the linguist, who is not supposed to care much about literature.

Literary men (and despite his bluff dismissal of stylistic niceties Snow was a literary man) are expected to show an artistic mastery of language without caring to know how language works. Raymond Chapman, the aim of whose book is to consider how the gap may be closed between the linguistic and literary approaches

to sounds, demonstrates that with "increasing knowledge of the mechanism and phonemic division of speech" novelists have learned to be more exact when describing what their characters say. In *Der Tod in Venedig*, which may be regarded as a pioneering work in this respect, Aschenbach hears a name like "Adgio" or "Adgiu" "mit seinen weicheo Mittlauten, seinem gezoegenem U-Ruf am Ende" (softened consonants and drawn-out sound at the end). But when, in 1955, Kingsley Amis produced *That Uncertain Feeling*, it was possible to use true linguistic terminology without shame: "Yes," she said. The lowering of the e-phoneme is widespread, I've noticed, in child-dialect. (Previously, in *I Like It Here*, Amis had made Bowen turn the radio knob and cut off Frank Sinatra in mid-phoneme - not quite right: he should have made it "mid-allophone".) Professor Chapman then looks at a book of my own - *The Doctor is Sick* (1960) - where, since the hero is a demented lecturer in linguistics, it is permissible to go the whole phonetic hog: "Whatsh all this here? ... Whash going on? Edwin noted the wet palatalisation of both the alveolar fricative phonemes." We have thus come a long way from J. B. Priestley, but, Chapman comments, "the eccentricity of its success is a reminder that detailed phonetic description would hinder rather than aid fictional dialogue if it were applied at all times". Enough already. We must not be eccentric. That puts us with George Bernard Shaw.

Shaw had been brought up on music and was an orator as well as a playwright. He dealt primarily in sounds and regarded his published plays as orchestral scores which came to life only in performance, though they could at a pinch, as real scores can, be realized as sonic phantoms in the inner ear. One of his preoccupations was the accurate presentation on the printed page of the phonemes uttered by dialect speakers (RP speakers could be left alone). In the first pages of *Pygmalion* - the only play in the repertoire to have a phonetician as hero - he attempts to show us as precisely as he can what Eliza Doolittle's Lisson Grove lingo is like: he even bullies his printer, as I will not bully mine, into inserting an e to indicate a schwa. Schwa is the commonest sound in English: it is the slack neutral phoneme which starts *aport* and finishes *folter*. Our regular alphabet still, seventy-odd years after the first publication of *Pygmalion*, is unwilling to accommodate a sign for the sound.

After a courteous apology to the reader, Shaw usually gives up his attempts to render

dialect with an approach to phonetic exactitude and satisfies himself with a few modifications of accepted orthography. "Bless yr awt, y'cawnt be a pawrt naradays", says Drinkwater in *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*. He says much more, and it is painful to read. Finally Shaw can console himself and the reader by reflecting that the real thing is available in the theatre, and actors ought to be, though nowadays they rarely are, instinctual dialecticians. For the writer whose dialogue is glued to the page the situation is not a Shavian one. For a poet like Gerard Manley Hopkins the problem of showing the reader not the phonemes but the suprasegmental elements of his idiolect was excruciating and has still not been solved. Both Shaw and Hopkins have received the specialist attentions of linguists. In Ida C. Ward's *Phonetics of English* Eliza's Cockney is set down in the narrow form of the International Phonetic Alphabet (as is also Jess Oakroyd's Yorkshire). A quasi-musical notation has been devised for "Harry Ploughman" and "Tom's Garland". But, with these, which are strenuously in the service of literature, we seem to remove ourselves from literature. Literature is letters, twenty-six of them, with a few diacritics and punctuation signals. Received English Pronunciation alone has more than forty phonemes, and it is encircled shadowily by a vast number of dialectal variations. N. Page, in *Speech in the English Novel*, sums up the situation like this: "The twenty-six letters of our alphabet, however ingeniously combined and supplemented by other graphological indications, can scarcely begin to represent the infinite variety and subtlety of speech." And yet this infinite variety and subtlety are precisely what the novelist, desperately ill-equipped, sets himself to render.

There are, however, a great number of novelists who limit themselves to the speech of a single class, that East Midland dialect which, nurtured in the older universities and the corridors of power, became the normative form of the language. The regular alphabet does not have to be stretched for its accommodation, and deviations from it can be signalled by the occasional dropped aitch, dropped aitches, with the odd "Gawd", were good enough for Kipling. In any case, if the grammar is bad the reader can assume that the phonemes are substandard. As in Greek and Elizabethan tragedy, only the ruling class is important, and the lower orders are there, if at all, for comic relief. Even in Dickens, who took Cockney seriously, nobody who speaks substandard English can be other than a coarse villain, a

faithful servant or a walk-on buffoon. Pip, who presumably starts by speaking like Joe Gargery, has the accent of a lord by the time he comes into money: we could not take him seriously if he did not. The traditional English novel with a Home Counties or county family ambience does not have to worry about sound.

But fiction with a Wessex, Leicestershire, Cumberland or Scottish setting would be false to the culture it tries to represent if it pretended that its characters spoke like the BBC Overseas Service. As a product of Lancashire, I have wished for years to commemorate my county in fiction, but, since the Middle Ages, there has been no accepted orthography for its dialect. Moreover, a character saying "A've gotten eed-warch wi' it" would never be taken as seriously as a lady in Henry James who complains of a migraine. Thomas Hardy knew the problem well. When a reviewer of *The Return of the Native* (*Athenaeum*, 1878) found the Wessex dialect difficult, he wrote a letter which establishes, for all time, the necessity of compromise:

An author may be said to fairly convey the spirit of intelligent peasant talk if he retains the idiom, compass and characteristic expressions, although he may not encumber the page with obsolete pronunciations of the purely English words, and with mispronunciations of those derived from Latin and Greek. In the pointing of standard speech hardly any phonetic principle at all is observed; and if a writer attempts to exhibit on paper the precise accents of a rustic speaker he disturbs the proper balance of a true representation by unduly insisting upon the grotesque element; thus directing attention to a point of inferior interest, and diverting it from the speaker's meaning.

True: no "phonetic principle at all is observed" in normal orthography. It is wrong to assume that the grophemes stand necessarily for the speech of the upper middle class: we interpret their phonemic significance by reference to texts and syntax and social setting. We are not far away from the situation of Japanese, where the bulk of the work is done by ideograms, with a syllabary to send in the occasional shift of phonetic light.

Leave well alone, then; do not distort and divert "from the speaker's meaning" with Barnesian and Tennysonian diacreses and strange-looking digraphs. But it sometimes happens that an approach to phonetic exactitude is essential to the whole ethos of a piece of fiction. I mention Mr Amis again, whom Professor Chapman strangely neglects. In *Lucky Jim* the focus of Jim Dixon's hatred of his professor's son is an affected pronunciation of terminal -y, so that "hostelry" becomes "hos-

The World's Wedding BY PETER PORTER

The most dangerous people are those for whom the present is the only reality. There is no mystery appropriate to them, no season of loneliness for disappointment. Now cut the carousel of slides to show a round-towered church with pigeons up to the door, an expedition of content, when all you'll hear is cheeky hopefulness at this, the noisiest of betrayals - there are those who'll go down unmade roads or leap the shuddering pay-train just to keep their RSVPs true, hurrying in heat and high-heels to the prophetic weddings of the world.

Pictures painted stand for ends beyond ourselves, while photographs are planned by truth to be the epilogues of life. Shun then the snaps that tumble from the air-mail letter (Cousin Circe's wedding) - look above the chimney-piece - in brows and dew-flecked mauves a river scene with cows is half the history of the boarding house and half the plains of hell. We have to make accommodation of the separate oracles - don't go down to the woods today or what shall we do to be saved? Nobody quarrels with banks and barriers, but the reckoning to be frightened of is a dusty scene in oils.

You've followed me so far. Of course you know it's dreams I'm thinking of, of which all pictures from the Quattrocento to the R. O. I., are nothing more than shorthand reveries. Thus, when we get the chance, we crowd into the topless tents of Camberley to sip the fizz and glimpse the bride changed for the journey south. Changed she will be, but be less deployed, her head upon Italian pillows, than when once she sought a wedding every day, response to being brimfully alive and hating life, uncoupling what her feet felt from the hope of arms, making from her mother at the ironing a massacre in gold and mortal tints.

Speed is eloquence, rushing on to judgment; Nature the bardic never blots a line. See how these worriers, neater by a franchise, settle a grid of surface treachery on everything; tracing the referent is basting St. Lawrence. We need such nuptials of world and world if only to catch up with dimmest relations, glass in hand. Didn't I meet you in that dream, the one of tip-truck and tricycle? Who said the silver-wattled pheasant had to die? The honeymoon car's a nimbus when sunlight stripes the headstones. Imagine them now, keepers and carvers, generations marrying in death.

telram" – a lowering to the near-limit of the slack high front vowel and a quick closing of the lips. In *Girl*, 20 Anis notes very astutely that consonantal assimilation goes far beyond the normally accepted in the speech of young people. His pathetic protagonist, an ageing composer who wants to be loved by the young, forces himself to pick up their dialect and asks for vogka and corm beef and tin peaches. To the future sociolinguistic historian Anis's observation should be of great value, since I doubt whether, despite all our audioelectronic resources, there are any recordings which concentrate on that particular phenomenon.

We have to distinguish between such notions serving a structural end (in this instance the delineation of character) and acting as mere décor. In *Jake's Thing* a college porter adds a mere splash of colour with his Oxfordshire diphthongs – "I hope you don't feel as lazy as you look, sir", where "lousy" means "lousy" (*Il Caso di Jake* inevitably renders "lazy" as *pigro*). Whether it is mere colour in the transposition of v and w in Dickensian Cockney ("be very careful of vidders, Samivel") it is difficult to say, though Sam Weller's leaving onomastic orthography to the taste and fancy of the speller seems to symbolize an antinomianism very much in character. But if one of the functions of the novel is to assist the future historian, Dickens seems to have left a large if distracted gift to the diachronic linguist, telling him that nineteenth-century

Paradigms regained

Jonathan Crowther

WILLIAM T. McLEOD (Editor)
The New Collins Thesaurus
759pp. Collins, £7.95.
0004330587

"Who needs a thesaurus?" asks the blurb-writer on the jacket flap of *The New Collins Thesaurus*, before proceeding to list the kinds of people who do (whether they know it or not), including anyone who has had to compose (among other things) a formal letter of thanks or complaint, a job application, an after-dinner speech, a vote of thanks, a technical article or specification – or perhaps he could have added, a review (commentary, critical assessment, criticism, critique, evaluation, judgment, notice study) such as this.

So far, so moderately good. But who needs a thesaurus and what does this one offer that is not already available to the seeker of *le mot juste*? The managing editor, William T. McLeod, has placed ease of access at the top of the priority list, opting for a single alphabetical arrangement of main entry words (about 16,000), selected according to the inevitably rather ill-defined criteria of superordinate terms most likely to be looked up. Within each entry "synonyms" are listed alphabetically in numbered subentries corresponding to the separate senses of polysemous words. The only other information given is on stylistic value and grammatical class where entry words may be of more than one part of speech. The format is shown by means of postpositional italicized and bracketed labels either in abbreviated form or in full. This distinction, which is both irritating and unnecessary, though presumably intended to save space, is based on the questionable assumption that (inf.) = informal and (sl.) = slang are more readily understandable than would be (Arch.) = archaic, which here appears in full. The capital initials of these labels are another odd choice. What is more, though obsolete words are occasionally included among synonyms, none is labelled as such, and none of the labels used are themselves defined. *Slang* as a noun does not even appear as an entry word.

So what does our job applicant or after-dinner speaker get for his money? An easy-to-use synonym dictionary of reasonably wide coverage (including phrasal synonyms and some idiomatic expressions) to jog the memory and call to mind the sought-after word – and frankly not much else. The limitations of an alphabetically arranged thesaurus such as this (and it is certainly not the first) are all too apparent. "275,000 alternatives" sounds impressive but must include frequent redupli-

cations of the same word in different contexts, as in Spanish *vaso* – hard to credit but almost certainly there.

It is strange that Chapman does not mention Swift's *Journal to Stella*, a great mine of phonetic speculation for the prosodic analysts, students of J. R. Firth. But his whole bibliography of principal sources is strange, drawing more on works where the concern with the sounds of speech is minimal – *A Clergyman's Daughter*, *Mrs Dalloway*, *Lord of the Flies* – than with obsessives like Amis. He has a little to say about Joyce, and he brings up the question as to what Stephen Dedalus really means when he broods on the words *Christ, home, ale, master* and how different they are in his own speech and in that of the English prefect of studies. That Joyce was superlatively sensitive to sound we do not need to be reminded, but we are aware that he rarely attempted to deform ordinary orthography in order to show how people speak (to show how some people think other people speak is a different matter: Father Bernard Vaughan did not say "Pilate, why don't you old back that owlin mob?" but Father Connec likes to think he did). Because Stephen does not specify precisely how those four key words affect his sensibility, too many professors have been liable to look at them lexically (one academic found in them "powerful symbols of disaffection", difficult to apply to ale) and not phonetically. There is no doubt that Stephen is thinking of how he himself, a pro-

tion of many items (the user can play his own game of thesaurus-hunting, following the trail of synonyms to see the extent to which each new entry reproduces the last). All indications of meaning are implicit rather than explicit, there being no attempt to categorize and classify the lexicon in the Roget tradition. Even within entries and numbered subsections of entries any attempt at conveying nuances of meaning is eschewed, having been rendered impossible by the rigidly alphabetical arrangement. Though the editor acknowledges that exact synonyms are rare in English, he still makes the claim that each synonym given in an entry is fully substitutable for its headword in a sensible English sentence. This is manifestly untrue (unless "sensible" is interpreted as meaning "synactically sound, whether or not idiomatically acceptable") since it ignores such crucial elements of the language as collocation and the tendency of adjectives (say) to function predicatively or attributively or both. To other words, it tacitly accepts that thesauruses such as this one are only of use to literate, and informed users of the language, as a short-cut to identifying the word that is already on the tip of the tongue.

Given then the modest aims of this thesaurus (extravagantly subtitled "a creative A-Z word-finder in dictionary form", though it is hard to see where lies its creativity) its value and effectiveness must depend upon the selection and organization of the words it includes, and the source from which they are culled. Though no information on this is given it is safe to assume that the raw material is drawn from the *Collins English Dictionary* and its smaller offshoots, all fine, dependable modern dictionaries. And whereas all new reference books need to be lived with and consulted over a prolonged period for an appreciation of their true worth, an initial appraisal of this one suggests that it satisfactorily achieves the targets it sets itself. The report-writer and the cross-word-solver will indeed find it a useful aid when all that is required is a reminder of the existence of a word or expression in a given semantic field. For virtually all other information about the word or expression he must rely, as before, on his dictionary.

The fact is that the evolution of the dictionary and the thesaurus as separate works of reference has progressed about as far as it can go. What is needed is a fusion of the information each provides in a single resource, so that words may be seen both as individual components of the living language and as members of a variety of groups, semantic, grammatical and syntactical. Book publishers have shrunk from the huge problems of size and layout frustrating such an obvious and desirable goal. Computer technology knows no such limitations.

vincial and slave of the British, pronounces the words: his phonemes are all too Irish, and those of the prefect of studies belong to the inventory of the British ruling class. The four words, in fact, are carefully chosen to illustrate the major dialectal differences.

Joyce is not only a great word-man but a great sound-man, even a great noise-man. Chapman correctly demonstrates how sceptical Joyce is of orthodox onomatopoeia. If the cock's crow was "Cock-a-diddle-dow" to Shakespeare and is "cocorico" on the Continent (as in *The Waste Land*), if our cuckoo and the German *Kuckuck* cannot agree on their call, then the sounds of nature had better not try to submit to an exact phonetic notation. A cat does not go "mknagoo!" when it wants milk or "mrknagoo!" when milk is promised or "gurrh!" when it runs towards it, but the signs will serve to remind the reader of known noises impossible to set down. "Everything speaks in its own way", thinks Bloom, hearing the printing presses go "Silt", and the way the non-articulate word speaks is important to Joyce. Chapman notes that Joyce's representations of noise come close to the technique of the strip cartoon: it is the sort of observation that Marshall McLuhan ought to have made. Perhaps it is only in the more literate strip cartoon that the sounds of the world can be taken seriously, meaning comically, in the *Astérix* books of Uderzo and Goscinny, for instance.

Leafing now through *Astérix et le Chaudron*, in its Italian version, I note that the Romans are permitted to speak a full-bodied Romano dialect, that the dynamics of speech find suggestive notation in the size and shape of the letters, words shiver along with their speaker, a roof fills the frame, and points of interrogation and exclamation take on various degrees of near-lexical status. The black look-out of the pirate ship suffers from rhotacism and says "Io vado a prepravare della carne ai fevvi, dell'avvosto e cvostate alle pvugne", while a Roman tax collector disdains speech balloons and makes his statements in the shape of inland

The screen version

Robert Irwin

RAY HAMMOND
The Writer and the Word Processor: A guide for authors, journalists, poets and playwrights
224pp. Hodder and Stoughton, £2.95.
0340365951

Seven questions about word processing that writers commonly ask:

1. Will it make me go blind? No, but prolonged staring into the computer screen can cause eye strain and headaches. Len Deighton and Terence Feely are quoted to this effect in Ray Hammond's book.
2. Will it check my spelling? Yes, most dedicated word processors and suitably adapted macros have spelling check capabilities. (Just think what a novel Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker* might have been if he had only used a spelling checker on the Apple.)
3. Will it make the coffee? No. Frederick Forsyth (also quoted in Hammond's book) has decided to stick with his secretary on these grounds. However, though the Tandy Radio Shack-80 III cannot actually go and hunt out the coffee jar, the milk and so on, it can, with the right add-ons, be programmed to switch the percolator on at the right time.
4. Will owning one make me look like a real writer? Yes. As another of Hammond's interviewees, Dorothy Dunnitt, author of the excellent Crawford of Lyndon saga, says about her acquisition of the Wang 5-111, "chance visitors who think that writing books is something to do, like knitting in your spare time in front of the television, are very impressed by the flashing green lights and can sometimes be persuaded that you really are rather busy".
5. I already have a computer: It is an 18,000 valve, 1,500 relay ENIAC. How do I convert it into a dedicated word processor? If I were you, I would opt start from there.
6. Can I use my word processor to bombard the A.A. and the *Reader's Digest* with spuriously personalized unwanted mail?

revenue forms. The noises are many. Obélix eating a *sangler* or *cinghiale* goes "Miami Scrontchi Scrontchi!" Tapping his head, he produces the wooden "Toet Toet Toet!" Flights sound like "Pifi Pafi Bang! Bong!" and the thought of secesses sets up a "TING" to the brain of a centurion. *Astérix* punches a scotinel into the air with a "CIACI" and Obélix kicks breaks a door with a casual (no exclamation point) "CRRRAC". There is a very wide semantic range; the artist, inking his own signs, does not have to submit to the limitations of typography. Those French intellectuals whose the best literary (or paraliterary) achievements of contemporary France in the *Astérix* books and the brief novels of San Antonio may be right.

Professor Chapman's book is, he admits, a mere beginning. It does little more than state what the position is as regards the relation between the sounds of the world and their modes of representation and description in an art which, primarily based on sounds, looks spatial and visual. Those of us novelists whose work is recorded for the blind, usually with high dramatic skill, sometimes feel that our original but thwarted intention – that of producing a wholly auditory artefact – is fulfilled in this form, but more often we have to conclude that the business of writing imaginative literature is not so simple as that. Even *Finnegans Wake*, the work with the strongest auditory bias of all, insists on describing itself as a book and making much of its visual appurtenances – diagrams, drawings in the margins and footnotes, typographical oddities that serve no phonetic end. A novel, even a poem, is a compromise, accepting the limitations of a very imperfect alphabet, handing over a great deal of its auditory connotations to the reader's memory and imagination, stretching the graphological gussets with regret and apology. In other words, much as literature would like to be the music of John Cage (noise and silence possessing equal status with meaningful sound) it ends up as letters. And the people who write it are men of letters.

Yes. Isn't it wonderful?

7. Is electricity necessary to run a word processor?

No. Ramón Lull's Ars Combinatoria model comes with word and thought processing bundled in and it is hand operated.

Hammond's book cites many writers on the wonders of word processing. As one might have expected, science fiction writers have been prophets and pioneers in this area. *The Writer and the Word Processor* also includes extended interviews with Len Deighton, Dorothy Dunnitt, Tom Sharpe and Terence Feely.

Hammond explains what a word processor can do for a writer and what a prospective buyer is likely to find desirable or necessary. The computer industry's publicity machine is geared to selling word processors as business machines for sending out lots of invoices. The salesman in the shop only tell you what you want to hear and if you do not know what you want to hear then their advice will be peculiarly enigmatic. Hammond advises us to think seriously about the following questions among others. How many pages can be handled on the screen and on disc? Will the program justify margins? Will it paginate automatically? Will it do a word count? Will what you see on the screen be the same as what is printed out?

The advantages of word processing are made clear and the author's enthusiasm has actually persuaded me that I must go out and buy one. This is almost certainly the last review which I will write on a 1948 Model T Imperial typewriter. However I am less happy about the author's specific recommendations. His own favoured word processing machine, the Tandy Radio Shack, has been criticized as difficult to learn and to operate. And his inordinate enthusiasm for the Sinclair QL seems to be based on advance publicity for the machine rather than actual acquaintance with it. It is a remarkable machine, but few typists of an average two-finger competence or above will find its keyboard satisfactory. Its Quill word processing program is notably slow in executing corrections and it is still unclear how many of the computer's numerous bugs have been removed.

The transcendental guest

Arnold Whittall

IAN KEMP
Tippett: The composer and his music
516pp. Ernst Eulenburg, 48 Great Marlborough Street, London W1V 2BN, £21.
0903873 230

In the first sentence of the preface to his most recent large-scale composition, Michael Tippett declares: "The *Mask of Time* is explicitly coerced with the transcendental. It deals with those fundamental matters that bear upon man, his relationship with Time, his place in the world as we know it and in the mysterious universe at large." Such issues have been central to Tippett's work from an early stage, and Ian Kemp, in what is by far the largest and most ambitious study of the composer to date, boldly confronts the difficult question of how such concerns might be shown to determine and direct the "fundamental matters" of Tippett's actual music. Like that music, Kemp's style is warm and spirited, rich and generous, yet the result is far from the benign encomium, the complacent eightieth-birthday accolade. Kemp remarks of *The Knot Garden*, "its nature is to provoke rather than assuage", and much the same may be said of his book. If, after reading it, our curiosity about fundamental aspects of Tippett's aesthetics and techniques is not assuaged, that is in large part the result of the book's consistent focus on what is most tantalizing, most controversial about the composer, and its concern with issues which aspire to reach out beyond music's own materials and processes. In ways which are often strikingly at odds with current musicological orthodoxies, Kemp seeks to underline the mystery behind the magic. Such writing cannot fail to be provocative, and the degree of provocation is a measure of Kemp's commitment to the truth as he sees it, and as (to the best of the author's knowledge and belief) Tippett sees it too.

The first part of the book, "A Short Biography", anticipates the main body of the text in giving the greatest emphasis to Tippett's formative years, up to and including the com-

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No room for the righteous

J. G. A. Pocock

CHRISTOPHER HILL
The Experience of Defeat: Milton and some contemporaries
342pp. Faber. £12.50.
0571 132375

"Now that England's historical destiny has whimpored to its end . . .". There is no mistaking the satisfaction with which Christopher Hill continues his long and honourable task of vindicating the memory of the historical alternative once presented by the Interregnum radicals, whom he does not hesitate to call "the saints". As he now presents the story — his views continue to develop invigoratingly in the course of writing — Commonwealth ideology in 1660 left England facing a choice between Harrington, the prophet of empire, and Milton, the "prophet against empire" in the phrase David Erskine once used of Blake: the apostolic whine "equal commonwealth" would have been a community of righteousness, not of power. The defeat of the saints ensured that the wrong course was taken, and his led to our own defeat in these whispering days.

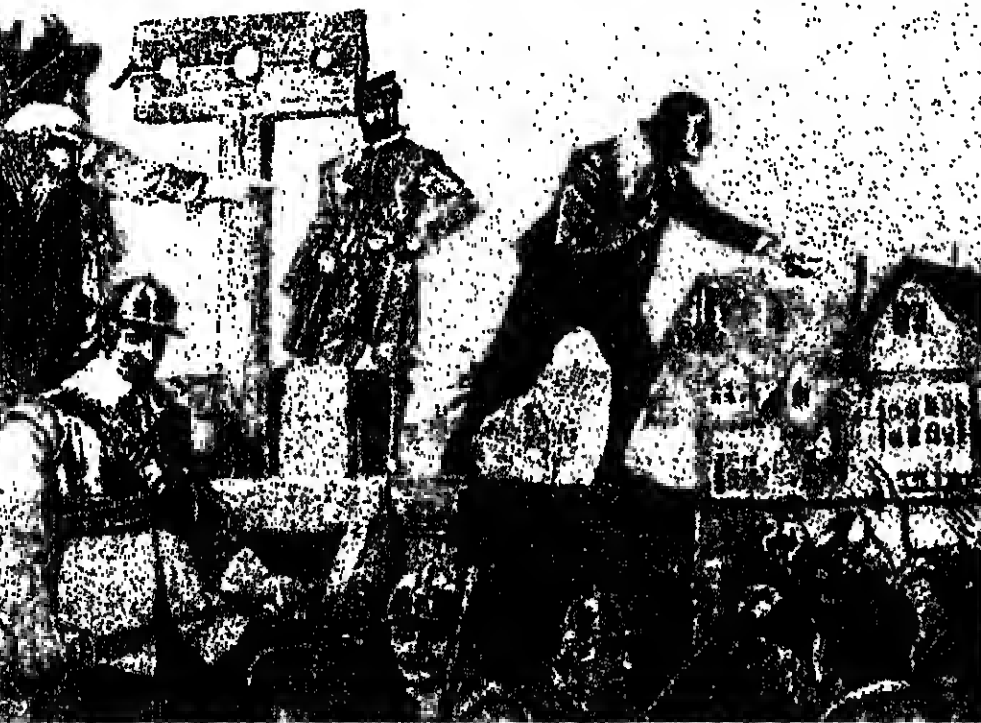
There is much to debate here, and it is a pity that Dr Hill sometimes proceeds more by dismissing alternative interpretations than by answering them. In consequence of this, there are a few unnecessary sneers. The present reviewer, for example, did not say that the unidentified pamphleteer "R. G." was "wrong", or committed a "misinterpretation" of Harrington's argument, in making trade a principal cause of the decline of the medieval nobility; R. G. was not interpreting Harrington at all. The point was that this interpretation of history is not to be found in Harrington, where Hill urgently desires to find it. It is, of course, to be found in R. G., and that should be enough for anyone; but Hill's appetite for corroborative evidence is insatiable, and not always discriminating. Similarly, I do not regard, and did not describe, Harrington as "an armchair academic theorist who got his ideas from reading Machiavelli". I explored the evidence for his affiliation with good-old-cause Army malcontents in an article published in 1970, and continued doing so in the 1977 Cambridge edition of his works. The claim to a monopoly of political realism is not the least irritating characteristic of the Marxist historian.

But these are petty and knockabout matters. Hill knows and understands more about the antinomian radicals of the 1640s and 50s than any historian living or dead, and there is a bouteness about his knowledge which alone would make this book valuable to read. To call it *The Experience of Defeat* is to draw our attention to two related questions: what became of these men and women after they were repressed by the Protectorate and the Restoration; and is there any way in which we can invest them with more than a negative historical significance — a role more dynamic than that of the path not taken, the people in the park? Hill would have done much if he had merely left us these questions: here he attempts to give some answers.

The experience of defeat necessarily leaves, in many or most cases, a legacy of silence. Not a few radicals died early, in Restoration gaols — whose conditions may well help explain why so few of them were hanged. Others — including such memorable figures as William Walwyn, Gerard Winstanley, Abiezer Coppe — lived on into the 1670s or longer, in silence and apparent conformity and normality. One wonders, in the teeth of oblivion, what the silent years of such vividly articulate people can have been like, and can only guess. Some became Quakers and some Muggletonians; Hill supplies what may have been the solution for others in his brilliant and moving account of William Sedgwick, in whom antinomian militancy became antinomian platism, and brought with it an ability to reflect sensitively on the history of defeat. Others turned from directly militant speech to the writing of poetry. To addition to his reading of Milton's later poems (which I shall not discuss here), Hill gives an interesting and attractive account of the Bahmenists John and his son Samuel, Portugal; the latter an author of minor but not despicable epic poems. There may be more here than the translation of experience into poetry; Bahmenist ideas per-

sisted and may have been one medium of the underground radical tradition for which we all search hopefully. It was almost certainly there, somewhere.

To any reader trying to take a view of English history in the long run, the problem must be whether there is any way in which the Interregnum radicals helped to make that history what it has been, as distinct from pointing out that it might have been something else. Hill has incomparably enlarged our knowledge of what they were like in their years of hope, but it might be said that even the present book does more to explore their lives than their legacies; and there are one or two missed opportunities here. There are perhaps two respects in which the depth of Hill's commitment has set limits to his ability to follow up the story. One is that his concern in writing such works as *The World Turned Upside Down* has always been in considerable measure celebratory: to rescue the radicals from oblivion and vindicate the authenticity of their vision. There are moments in the present work when he comes close to writing as their martyrologist; the sufferings of the saints are edifying, even when their blood is not the seed of any very visible church. But one goes on asking where the seed fell and whether anything sprang up.



"John Lilburne facing the pillory", reproduced from a new, illustrated edition of Max Beer's *A History of British Socialism* (271pp. Spokesman, Bedford Row, London, 1984). £8.95. 085124 4084

There is a lengthy section in which Hill traces and endorses J. R. Jacob's study of Henry Stubbe and presents this former associate of both Henry Vane and Thomas Hobbes as carrying on an independent counter-science, highly critical of Royal Society ideology and capable of continuing into a new age the antinomianism and hylozoistic materialism found in the religious radicals. This view of Stubbe seems to be correct in essentials (though I do not quite accept Jacob's and Hill's account of him as "neo-Harringtonian"). What is puzzling is that Hill does so little with the opportunity to follow up Margaret Jacob's thesis of "the Radical Enlightenment", in which Henry Stubbe, John Toland and others are seen as carrying on a tradition of radical and illuminist speculation, with subversive implications that recur throughout the eighteenth century and into the age of revolutions. The radical interlude's legacy to conservative thought was that it evoked a polemic against "enthusiasm" in which Anglicans and sceptics joined, and for a century and a half campaigned against millenarianism, Behmenism, Platonism or occultism, whenever they caught sight of them; and one would like to know what was being said on the "enthusiast" side at each point in this long history. Hill could have used Jacob's study more decisively in the attempt to get beyond defeat and suggest that radicalism had a future; he does not do much more than demonstrate that Stubbe also was among the prophets.

The second limiting factor in Hill's reading of history has been his persistent limitation on treating the Interregnum radicals as proto-bourgeois and treating them as proto-socialists. He would now, I think, argue that both can be found amongst them, but the problem does not end there. The words "bour-

geois" and "bourgeoisie" are mercifully lacking in *The Experience of Defeat*, but the essential bifurcation is to be found in the antithesis with which the book concludes: that between Harrington as prophet of communal empire and Milton as prophet of social righteousness. Here there is both misinterpretation and missed opportunity. To begin with, Hill seems to misunderstand the nature of Harrington's imperialism. It consists in two elements: the promise that England will enjoy the hegemony of a liberated Europe, following the Protestant crusade of which even George Fox dreamed (pp. 157-8), and a proposal to depopulate Ireland of its original inhabitants and open it to English settlers (like R.G., who claimed to be an officer of the army in Ireland writing from Waterford). As for "the colonies in the Indies", Harrington thought them certain to become independent and not worth establishing. It is interesting to follow Hill in finding hints of radical emigration to the Caribbean; but in two remarkable works — *The Governors-General: the English Army and the Definition of Empire* and *1676: the End of American Independence* — Stephen Saunders Webb has shown radical colonists in Jamaica and Virginia being crushed and subjected by the royal, military and mercantile structure of empire that took shape

may be deeper reasons behind Hill's neglect of the Commonwealthmen. Has he ceased to see the maintenance of an active parliamentary electorate as an important element in the radical programme, or does he find the Commonwealthmen insufficiently populist, antinomian and saint-like to fit his understanding of radicalism? There is a further ambiguity. As we explore the partly Harringtonian Commonwealth ideology we find that it was also Country, that it appealed to Tory gentlemen as well as to urban artisans and tradesmen, and that urban radicalism itself wore the Tory label throughout the first two Hanoverian reigns. Well enough known to eighteenth-century Whigs, these facts will never fit the presumptions of Whig historiography on which Marxists by and large still operate; and those of this persuasion — I am thinking less of Hill or even Thompson than (for example) of Isaac Kramnick — labour to decumpose eighteenth-century radicalism, polarizing it into agrarian reactionaries and bourgeois progressives. But this does not save Hill's thesis of the opposition between imperialism and righteousness. The Georgian radicals were the enemies of oligarchy; this remained constant while their attitudes towards empire shifted. Only during the ascendancy of the elder Pitt were the London "patriots" advocates of war and conquest as well as quasi-republican critics of the Whig régime, and the Beckford and Sawbidgees were using a rhetoric of violence in support of the American colonists fifteen years later. These were not the saints of the World Turned Upside Down, but they are the only radicals we have and their pedigree goes back to the Good Old Cause. The history of counter-régime politics must be taken as we find it, and Hill's thesis seems to leave too much unaccounted for.

The Experience of Defeat concludes with the antithesis between Harrington and Milton, but does not state the disagreement between the two men in the terms both would have recognized. Milton believed in a rule by the saints, and would, like Vane and Stubbe, have limited participation in politics to those who could prove their saintly credentials. Hill applauds this as "realistic", but it was what Harrington meant by "the base spirit of the narrow oligarchy". He did not mean aristocratic rule by "oligarchy", any more than he feared saintly rule as popular. To him the rule of the saints meant what it would have meant: the rule of a self-appointed élite, claiming to be the People on the grounds that they understood the People better than the People understood themselves. "Is not this the dragon, that old serpent?" It has been the ruin of most revolutions in modern times, and the proto-revolutionary English of the seventeenth century were about to encounter their own version of the monster. We know what happened, and there is a poignancy about Hill's concluding evocation of Milton: "In 1644", run the last words of the book, "Milton saw England as 'a nation of prophets'. Where are they now?" The answer is distressingly obvious. They are where they have been before: trying to institute a rule of the saints under circumstances even less propitious than those of 1654 or 1659. They cannot, this time, dissolve the Rump Parliament and summon Barebones's saints to Westminster.

English history, viewed across three centuries, seems to exhibit persistence and recurrences enough to make writing it a highly ideological act. The case against Hill is not that he has a revolutionary vision but that, in the last analysis, he has expressed it only in the form of an opposition between what did happen and what might have happened; and that this does not sufficiently account for the complexities of what did happen. To denounce the age of parliament and empire and triumph at its downfall is to declare only that Israel has slaved and is now led captive in some European or Atlantic Babylon. Even if England's historical significance is now at an end — whatever that might mean exactly — history can be more concretely and dynamically written.

Religion and Rural Revolt, edited by Janos M. Bak and Gerhard Benke (491pp. Manchester University Press. £30.00 0 7190 0990 1), is a collection of papers on both the European and non-European aspects of the theme. They were originally delivered at the Fourth Interdisciplinary Workshop on Peasant Studies held at the University of British Columbia in 1982.

Pains and their publicity

Eugen Weber

PIETER SPIERENBURG
The Spectacle of Suffering: Executions and the evolution of repression — from a pre-industrial metropolis to the European experience
274pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50.
0521 261864

One does not have to agree with this thoughtful and thought-provoking book to benefit from it and to enjoy its reading. Enjoy may not be the *mot juste* for over 200 pages devoted to whipping, branding, maiming, hanging, beheading, garroting and breaking on the wheel; but this reader at least was glad to find the subject of crime and punishment (here, especially the latter) approached neither in terms of morality nor of utility, whose advocates have consumed forests to determine the irresolubility, but by simple historical description.

Pieter Spierenburg, of course, has a thesis of his own. He is interested in the evolution of judicial repression as an aspect of changing mentalities between the twelfth and the nineteenth centuries. He relates the infliction of pains and their publicity on the one hand to the establishment and gradual stabilization of governmental machinery, and on the other to the sensibilities of the upper and middle classes. Government, having expropriated private vengeance, had to justify its claim to a monopoly of violence by resolute and evident practice of criminal justice. In times when there was practically no police and when all men carried knives (what else would they have eaten with?) sensibilities determined acceptable chastisements. A world accustomed to the infliction of physical injury and suffering accepted, even appreciated, their public exhibition. The gradual stabilization of public order and "of control by the ruling élites" would permit the waning of public punishment. At the same time, "relative pacification produced domesticated élites", more civilized and hence more squeamish. Spierenburg holds that the eighteenth-century transformation of repression was out, as has been argued, a consequence of rationalist criteria newly discovered. Rather, rationalist criticisms of belated practices, which met with no success in earlier times, acquired new effectiveness as sensibilities altered.

Torture was abolished in most of Western Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century, and the display of the dead bodies of those who underwent capital punishment was discontinued, just when the "promiscuity between the living and the dead" (Philippe Ariès *dixit*) was coming to an end, when public anatomical lessons became things of the past, when "the barbarity of former times" gave way before the rising tide of sensibility, anxiety, revulsion over physical suffering. Roughly between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century, those "awesome ceremonies" as the scaffold had been meant to maximize exemplary display began to stir pity and unease. Gallows were now perceived as "a stage of sorrow", not just for victims but for bystanders too. They turned from monumental stone to temporary wooden structures and their site was shifted ever further from the centre of towns. Finally, in most countries, executions themselves, once designed to be as public as possible, were concealed within prison-walls. By the 1870s, public executions seem to have been abolished in most European countries with the exception of France, which retained the spectacle of death until 1939.

Stemming as it does from a doctoral dissertation on *Corporal Punishment, Executions and Torture in Amsterdam, 1650-1750*, the book draws its substance from the author's original work on the Dutch experience. This biography has been supplemented by much comparative reading, and the result is compact with information: about judges and other authorities, executioners, spectators and "victims". The last are those on whom penalties were inflicted: convicted criminals, of course, but also accused persons who had committed suicide in prison; and who were dragged to the gallows to be there exposed; animals hanged, burnt, or buried alive into the seventeenth century for injuries they caused; and those executed in effigy, not only in their absence but to their presence to frighten the Dutch cities by writing

the executioner's sword over their heads in simulacrum of the real thing.

Spierenburg discriminates between crimes such as smuggling or tax evasion, which few beyond the authorities condemned, and crimes against property or life which even the popular classes did not condone. He enlarges on the ambiguous status of the hangman: infamous and excluded from society by his bloody trade, yet sought after for his semi-magical powers, that ranged from exorcism to setting broken limbs, or for the favours he procured, like the cord or thumb of a hanged man, or the blood of the decapitated — a sovereign remedy for epilepsy. Spierenburg suggests that both the degraded status of hangmen and their association with healing may have dwindled after 1800. In fact, both probably continued while their functions lasted. In the mid-nineteenth century French folk retained their horror of gallows and their servants, yet still pursued them to buy *graisse de châtiment*, known to be effective against many ills.

Attempts to rehabilitate executioners never succeeded in exorcising the public horror of professionals who torment, maim and kill for money. The hangman's much defiled and dishonoured, the hangman's work maintained the rule of law. By the time of the Revolutionary Terror there was talk of honouring executioners with the title of *vengeur national*. The prisoners of the Republic, however, went to great lengths to cut their own hair, destined for keepsakes, and save it from the defiling touch of the *bourreau*.

Given the author's valid point that, far from a sudden change, the transformation of repression was a slow, halting process, he cannot be faulted for devoting much of his chapter on the disappearance of public executions to the preliminaries of their fading. I regret, however, that the nineteenth century receives short shrift. That, after all, was when the great debates about publicity took place and, mostly, were resolved. The nineteenth century, as the *Communist Manifesto* notes severely, was the age of humanitarians, of charities, societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and "hole-in-the-corner reformers of every imaginable kind". Prevention of cruelty to animals, among the others, was supposed to ease the prevention of cruelty to men. Their preservation from spectacular public exhibitions of the same would be a step in that direction.

A closer look at the nineteenth century would also have allowed Spierenburg to reflect his convincing argument from sensibility, which hinges on a growing empathy for fellow human beings. Had Spierenburg dug more deeply, he might have found that identification with other humans which, he acknowledges, extended only to few before 1800, reached to few more besides after that year. Empathy for victims of "justice" may have intensified after the experience of prison and vulnerability to which the French Revolution exposed many among the upper classes; but this is not a prospect that the book explores. My own view is that closer acquaintance with hitherto unfamiliar experiences of humankind may have persuaded those who survived them to support laws against cruelty to animals, not men.

What inspiration, then, other than ideological, was there to suggest mutual identification? Social and regional groups continued through the century sharply differentiated by garb, bearing, physique, modes of affectivity, capacity of expression. It would be long before members of the middle and upper classes could look on those beneath them as anything but creatures of another race. The nameless hero of Victor Hugo's immensely influential *Le Dernier Jour d'un condamné* (1829) turns out to be a man of delicate sensibilities, "refined by education", who speaks Latin, and who can afford the luxuries of relatively clean clothes, pen, ink, paper and a lamp in his cell. Whatever Hugo's genius, readers would find it much more difficult to identify with some inarticulate loon.

Spierenburg knows, as did Hugo, that upper-class sensibilities were not shared by the multitude. But the conclusions that he draws from this are limited. He shows no interest in the revolution that members of the Dutch Society for the Moral Improvement of Prisoners, self-described as "civilized and enlightened", may have felt towards the "lower, less civilized and less enlightened popular classes"; hence he

does not envisage the abolition of public executions as part of the same civilizing didactic process that presided over their original publicity.

Nor does the author ponder the effect of novel and more accessible amusements and diversions. Whether they involved whipping or maiming or putting to death, executions were dramatic ceremonies designed to serve "as a sort of morality play". Spierenburg, who elucidates the moralizing very well, completely ignores the festive "play", despite its evident attractions that regularly filled Amsterdam's great Dam Square, or the place de Grève in Paris and that, by his own account, never failed to draw vast crowds, whether to tiny German villages in the nineteenth century or to French country towns in the twentieth. It seems relevant to consider the entertainment value of such occasions in ages when amusements were rare and hard to come by; and the possible effects of easier access to other forms of popular entertainment which made executions more dispensable.

Not that executions, when available, lost their popular favour; witness the crowds they continued to draw where they continued public. Why shouldn't the public find paid to see men batter or animals maul each other, flock to enjoy even more sensational spectacles free? Can one hazard that the "repression" which Spierenburg describes the ruling groups employing to keep the populace in line was simply changing directions? Now it protected the sensibilities of the more fastidious against the callous rabble; even against the vindictiveness of those more exposed than they to violence and danger to person and property. Class justice new-style looks like class self-indulgence.

The divergence between the élite and the popular multitude that Spierenburg traces from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century

To kill the king

Colin Jones

DALE K. VAN KLEY
The Damians Affair and the Unravelling of the Ancien Régime 1750-1770
374pp. Princeton University Press. £32.30.
0691 054029

Killing kings — or trying to — was taken seriously in eighteenth-century France. So when François Damians, an unemployed servant from Artois, attempted to assassinate Louis XV outside the palace of Versailles on cold January day in 1757, he assured himself a certain celebrity as the spreadeagled centre-piece of a spectacular execution scene, with four horses clamping at the bit as they anxiously (and in the end unsuccessfully) tried to pull him limb from limb. Damians's action also inspired a painstakingly thorough enquiry into the incident by magistrates from the Parlement of Paris, and it is the records of that enquiry which are the starting point for Dale Van Kley's interesting analysis of some of the ideological origins of the French Revolution.

Damians himself, it would appear, was less the clear-eyed, politically-conscious precursor of the Revolution than a confused Lee Harvey Oswald figure, acting for motives unclear even to himself. His judge, however, found it difficult to accept that in such a case there was no accomplice, no "grassy knoll", no string-puller behind the gratuitous act. And their suspicions are evidently contagious. Revelling in the dark corners and the coincidences which always seem to abound in cases of the sort, Professor Van Kley evidently feels they had a point. While Damians was a "nobody", he was one the less "a nobody not unknown to some pretty important 'somebodies'". The "somebodies" in question included several of the most outspoken magistrates of the Parlement of Paris, with whom — over tax innovations but also over the so-called "sacramental controversy" (the question of whether the last rites should be withheld from unrepentant Jansenists) — Louis had been at loggerheads throughout the 1750s. Further, regents in the plot include the points that large numbers of parliamentaires had just, in December 1756, resigned from their offices over the Jansenist

has grown no less today. Rather, more. The popular masses never sympathized with the use of repression to control what they perceived as victimless crimes: smuggling, for example. They feel no different in our day; but now they manifest growing uneasiness at the confusion (evident even in the pages under review) between victims of crimes and "victims" of justice or of society, who abound in novels like those of Hugo. "Who is really guilty?" asks Hugo about *Claude Gueux* (1834). "Is it he? Is it we?" Those who have suffered from robbers or hoodlums know the dilemma to be false.

Let us go back to *Le Dernier Jour d'un condamné*. The novel, Hugo explained in the preface he wrote for it in 1832, was meant to demolish the case for capital punishment by stressing those "sentimental reasons" that he deemed "the best". Spierenburg has noted the growing nineteenth-century repugnance for corporal penalties; but those who express this distaste in his pages are still torn between their compassion and their sense of wrong. The next step was to dissolve the latter. Hugo's extended plea for empathy with human suffering never once referred to the "victim's" victim. Nor did it provide any indication of the crime for which his hero had been condemned to death: which, given the French penal code of those days, was probably premeditated murder, quite possibly aggravated by theft (see Ruskolnikov).

This is why I think that the book before us peters out too soon. I do not admire it less. Spierenburg has addressed an important topic in terms that help us to comprehend it, and with an equanimity that is seldom found in discussions of this sort. He chronicles activities seldom analysed, and never so thoroughly, comparatively and in detail. And he does it so that, while his own views are clear, the reader is allowed to draw his own conclusions.

question; that Damians always maintained that he was motivated by "religion"; that he conceived of his act as a crude kind of political bargaining (he had not wanted to kill the king, he stressed, but to "touch" him); and that he seems to have been aware of some of the arguments surrounding the sacraments controversy. The facts are sufficiently persuasive for Van Kley to argue that in the Damians affair we are witnessing an early example of the kind of cross-class ideological contamination crucial to the politicization of the Parisian masses later in the century.

Anglo-Saxon historians of eighteenth-century France have perhaps tended to overestimate the purely financial element in disputes between the monarchy and the Parlement of Paris in the final decades of the Ancien Régime, to the detriment of the Jansenist question. Van Kley certainly redresses the balance here, by his insistence that in the Parlement's support, from the late 1740s to the mid 1760s, for Jansenist, Gallican and constitutionalist positions were to be found much of the heat and many of the arguments which would set monarch and Parlement at odds at the outbreak of the Revolution. Certainly it is instructive to find so many parallels between the 1750s and the late 1780s and early 1790s: the "desacralization" of the monarchy, popular anticlericalism, a refractory clergy, growing secular interference in ecclesiastical matters, and so on. The fact, however, that equally suggestive parallels could have been made between the 1750s and the 1650s when the "religious Fronde" was in full apogee, gives one pause.

Following a couple of decades in which the perspective of the *longue durée* has been dominant in French historiographical circles, the "event" has been staging something of a comeback in recent years, and Van Kley's analysis of the Damians affair will certainly contribute to that rehabilitation. Historians of the origins of the Revolution will be unlikely in the future to ignore the kind of religious and political terrain opened up by this close study of a bungled assassination attempt. Nevertheless, Professor Van Kley ultimately fails to persuade this reader at least of the theses of "contamination" and "anticipation" within his chronological framework.

Hitler's last throw

Michael Carver

CHARLES B. MACDONALD
The Battle of the Bulge
712pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £12.95.
0 297 78390
CHARLES WHITING
Ardennes: The secret war
196pp. Century. £10.95.
0 7126 09245

Charles B. MacDonald subtitles his book "The Definitive Account", as he well may, although he draws generously from the US Army's Official History by Hugh M. Cole, to which he, as Deputy Chief Historian of the US Army, himself contributed. He has also drawn on his own personal experience as a twenty-two-year-old Infantry company commander in the battle, of which he gave a graphic account in his book *Company Commander*.

In this masterly story of the eleven-day Battle of the Bulge - which Churchill, attempting to pour oil on the waters troubled by Montgomery's tactless press conference after it, justifiably called "The greatest American battle of the war" - MacDonald succeeds in achieving a near-perfect balance between detail and the overall picture. His narrative is as clear and well-judged in describing and discussing the decisions, actions and personalities of the commanders, from the level of regiment up to the Supreme Commander, Eisenhower, as it is in its account of events at the level of the front-line soldier and the unfortunate Belgian civilian, caught up in the maelstrom in mid-winter.

Few books of military history present such a vivid and realistic picture of the confusion of the battlefield; of how much the decisive turn of events depends on chance, on the action or inaction of individual commanders or small bodies of men, while at the same time the higher commanders attempt, sometimes with success, sometimes not, to bend the general pattern of action to their will. MacDonald examines in considerable detail the failure of Allied intelligence to realize that Hitler planned a major offensive in that area at that time. One of the most interesting revelations, not

widely known, is that Hitler began planning it as early as August 19, 1944, only four days after the final failure of a similar counter-offensive in Normandy. Indications of his intention became available to Allied Intelligence, but were either ignored or misinterpreted. In spite of setbacks at Aachen and the Hürtgen Forest, a general state of euphoria prevailed at the headquarters of Eisenhower, Montgomery and Bradley. The concentration of Panzer forces, which was not accurately located, was interpreted as being a reserve either to counter further Allied thrusts towards the Ruhr, or for a counter-attack to recapture Aachen. Nobody in their senses, it was thought, least of all the conventional Field-Marshal von Rundstedt, recently appointed to Supreme Command in the West, would think of launching an armoured offensive in mid-winter across the grain of the Ardennes. But the man who made the decisions, Hitler, was indeed no longer in his senses. The Intelligence staffs, almost to a man, had, to quote MacDonald, "committed the most grievous sin of which a G-2 is capable. They had looked in a mirror for the enemy and saw only the reflection of their own intentions."

The immediate reaction of the higher commanders to the news of the initial attack was coloured by this attitude. They were slow to set counter-measures in train, and the weather saw to it that the air forces could do little to help. The burden fell on the front-line troops, partly experienced ones sent to a quiet sector to recover from their exertions and losses elsewhere, partly completely green formations in their first action. The author's detailed account shows that, contrary to much that was said and written at the time and for some years after, and in spite of individual failures, they acquitted themselves well. It was their resistance, even when totally cut off, combined with the firm defence of some key-points, notably the Elsenborn ridge, St Vith and Bastogne, which from the start threw German plans out of gear. The traffic jams caused by the restriction of routes imposed - on Sepp Dietrich's Sixth SS - and Manteuffel's Fifth Panzer Armies were the principal factor in preventing Model's Army Group B from reaching the Meuse.

There was never any hope of the operation succeeding in its ambitious aim of reaching Antwerp and dividing the British and Canadian, physically and psychologically, from the Americans.

MacDonald's book brings out with stark clarity the problems which face commanders at all levels in such an operation. Is one to hang on, and order one's subordinates to do so to the last man and round, in which case neither the men nor their equipment can be extricated when they are outflanked? Their ammunition and supplies exhausted, they are forced to try and straggle back and are lucky if they make it: in this battle, a remarkable number did succeed. If on the other hand a coordinated withdrawal is attempted, it can only too easily turn into a rout and encourage others to take to their heels. MacDonald explains that many of the movements, which were interpreted by other units as flight, were in fact authorized withdrawals either of logistic units or in order to effect a redeployment.

Some of the generals come well out of the story, others do not. The author is critical of Bradley and Patton, as he is also of Montgomery, although he gives all three of them credit where he feels it is due. On balance he agrees that Eisenhower was right, acting on the advice of his British assistant chief of staff, Whiteley, to give Montgomery responsibility for the northern flank, if only because it inclined him to cooperate. One of his most interesting observations is his criticism of Eisenhower's appeal to Stalin, backed by and transmitted through Churchill, to help out by an early offensive in the East. It was unnecessary: the Ardennes battle was by then firmly under control, and it handed to Stalin valuable cards which he played at Yalta.

Charles MacDonald's book is as valuable to the historian as it is to students of war and to anybody interested in what the war was like. Those who prefer a raw, tabloid journalist's tale, limited to the exploits of a few of the more sensational figures on the German side, may like to spend almost as much for Charles Whiting's slender volume, *Ardennes: The secret war*; but they will not get good value for their money.

Women-of-war

Phyllis Willmott

PENNY SUMMERFIELD
Women Workers in the Second World War:
Production and patriarchy in conflict
214pp. Croom Helm. £16.95.
0 7099 23171

The British government took the conscription and direction of women during the Second World War further than any of the other combatants. Policy-makers were thus forced to take up the issue of women's home obligations because this affected what they could be expected to take on outside the home. Unfortunately, as Penny Summerfield sees it, the strength of conventional expectations (based on what she describes as pre-war patriarchal attitudes and capitalistic practices) blocked the opportunity for the development of collectivized domestic services. Had such services been introduced, so her argument goes, women could have been freed to take an equal place with men in the economy during the war, a situation which would have perhaps continued into peacetime.

There was, of course, some success at collectivization. Ministers and civil servants in relevant government departments pressed for many more day-nurseries, introduced British Restaurants for "communal feeding", and pronounced on the need for "neighbours' shopping leagues". As the shortage of labour intensified and more women were drawn into the workforce, policies increasingly focused on ways of getting women to carry on with their double duties. The author concludes: "If the experience of mobilising women for war shifted the assumptions and ideologies of policy-makers and employers about women and work at all, it was in the direction of the idea that women could combine paid and domestic work without damage to industrial productivity and without undermining the concept that their first responsibility was to their home."

In weighing up this argument it must be pointed out - as, to be fair, the author does - that the study concentrates on women who were mobilized for war work in industry. (In this sense the title of the book certainly claims too much.) The study does not therefore cover women whose war work was in the women's services or in the Land Army (most of whom were single women who found themselves, far from doing two jobs, headily liberated from most family ties and pre-war roles). It does not cover professional women, or white-collar workers, both groups which were to make some progress towards equality with men in their occupations during and following the war. Nor does it include those who were exempt from registration and did not have to go into paid employment. These women for the most part had young children and could not find substitute care, or were exempt because of their age (fifty or over by 1943). Even by 1945, these non-working women were the majority. They were the ones who took on voluntary work for such organizations as the WVS, and who were engaged in a mesh of mutual aid services which were essential both to the women in paid work and the war effort.

The implication behind much of the author's argument is that there was too much opportunity given to women to choose to remain outside the labour market, and that it was this that weakened the opportunity to end the "gender identification" of domestic responsibilities. It is by no means certain, however, what the long-term result would have been if greater powers of co-optation of women, and its corollary of the "ready provision of universal collective facilities", had been implemented. But whether or not one accepts Summerfield's ideological slant, the historical material she has so assiduously assembled from the archives of the Public Record Office and Mass Observation is revealing. More than anything else the book is successful in portraying the continuous efforts that were made by government to take account of the obligations most women themselves believed to be important. An alternative conclusion to the author's is that the policy-makers, while not giving much thought to feminist values, did succeed in holding on to democratic ones. At the time, this did seem of greater priority.

A polite intruder

Michael Neve

ELIZABETH CHAMBERS PATTERSON
Mary Somerville and the Cultivation of Science, 1815-1840
264pp. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Nijhoff. Dfl 190.
90 247 28231

The scientific activity and organization of women in the nineteenth century have received surprisingly little attention. Women are no doubt assumed to be hidden somewhere in the historical record: as wives, or more generally, as audience. As wives, they get little historical notice, and one can only imagine the long hours that, say, Emma Darwin or Lady Lyell must have spent being talked across by their scientifically animated husbands. Even when marital relations were more argumentative, as was clearly the case with the chemist Sir Humphry Davy and his Scottish wife Jane (née Apreece), it continues to seem inappropriate to discuss the personal life when thinking about the course of Davy's scientific career, with its moments of intense creativity, followed by years of alienation, snobbery and religious anxiety. As an audience for science, women do receive some blanket recognition, as the target for afternoons of instruction in scientific institutions, where for example the unimagin-

ably exotic sexuality of flowers could be censored, via the taxonomy of Linnaeus and his followers, and served up as an edifying dish for mothers and their children, complete with natural theological glosses that edge the listener to a regard for the Creator and his (sic) carefully planned designs.

Mary Somerville, whose name now graces an Oxford college, was one of the exceptions to the rule of exclusion, and Elizabeth Chambers Patterson has spent a number of years preparing a proper study of her. The result is an extremely useful addition to the under-nourished area of scientific biography, conventional in tone but excellently researched and especially clear about the importance of good metropolitan contacts for aspirant scientists of either sex.

Born Mary Fairfax in Jedburgh, Scotland, in 1780, Elizabeth Patterson's heroism was well drilled in the dramatic arts while very young, and when she made her way into polite Edinburgh society she already displayed some of the characteristics that were to make her famous, politeness above all. Mary also took an unusual interest in mathematics, which must have sustained her through her unhappy first marriage, to a cousin, which lasted from 1804 to September 1807. He died then, aged twenty-nine, an event that shaped her whole career. She was taken up by sympathetic Whig

Edinburgh, and married another cousin, William Somerville, in 1812. Through her husband, and her social graces, she quickly charmed leading European savants, helped by William's election to the Royal Society.

The informal scientific career that followed could be said to show the advantages of enthusiasm, application and also the capacity to imitate. As a result, there were papers (some delivered by her husband) to the Royal Society, as well as the translation of Laplace's *Mécanique céleste* of 1830, and the synthetic *On the Connexion of the Physical Sciences* of 1834. The regularities and fastidious neutralities of mathematics and the physical sciences allowed for Mary to be approved by her male colleagues: it might have been a different story if she had wanted to revive, say, Erasmus Darwin's *The Loves of the Plants*.

Somerville became internationally famous, and a cautious defender of women's suffrage and need for higher education. Elizabeth Patterson's excellent use of the manuscript sources brings alive the world which acknowledged that one woman at least should be given what would now be called token recognition. And it is clear that Mary contributed to the distillation of the approved virtues of early Victorian science, with the occult firmly on physical laws, regularity and sanitized pedagogy.



"Snails" (1833), three-year-old Paul Klee's pencil sketch on a coloured print of beetles, reproduced from *Klee and Nature* by Richard Verdi (258pp. Zwemmer, £22; paperback, £15. 0 302 02747 5).

A fossil-hunter's record

Robert Martin

RICHARD E. LEAKEY
One Life: An autobiography
207pp. Michael Joseph. £12.95.
0 7181 2247 X

The Leakey family rightly occupies a prominent place in the history of the search for fossil evidence of human evolution. The original husband-and-wife team, Louis and Mary, radically transformed the overall picture through the discovery of vital new fossil material in East Africa, notably in the Olduvai Gorge of Tanzania. At Olduvai, Mary Leakey has continued her valuable work up to the present day, following the untimely death of Louis in 1971. By good fortune, one of their four sons, Richard, also became a fossil-hunting enthusiast - despite his earlier avowed intent to do anything rather than follow his parents' footsteps - and at the age of only forty he has already established himself as an authority. In 1968 he opened up a vast new fossil site covering some 500 square miles on the eastern shore of Lake Turkana in Kenya. Regular fossil-hunting seasons there have yielded an abundance of revealing new specimens. The new permanent base camp at Koobi Fora has provided a centre for one of the most sustained and rewarding campaigns ever conducted in the quest for new evidence concerning human origins.

Leakey has already written a number of successful books about the interpretation of the fossil evidence of human evolution (*Origins; People of the Lake; The Making of Mankind* - the first two in collaboration with Roger Lewin and the third in association with a seven-part television series). His latest book *One Life* is, by contrast, a very personal account of his own experiences between his birth in 1944 and a crucial turning-point in 1979. The significance of that date, and of the title of his autobiography, relates to the fact that a severe kidney complaint (first diagnosed in 1969) culminated in complete renal failure in 1979. Thanks to the donation of a kidney by his previously estranged brother Philip, who had just become a Member of Parliament in Kenya, Richard survived this ordeal to build upon his previous accomplishments. *One Life* begins and ends with reference to Leakey's operation and subsequent recovery, underlining the signal impact of this episode on his life. Indeed, the period just prior to the operation, during which regular renal dialysis sessions were required, was also significant in that he took the opportunity to write most of the manuscript for the book.

Leakey's autobiography contains a fascinating

blend of ingredients over and above the main story of his progressive involvement in the hunt for human fossil evidence. He experienced at first hand the transition of Kenya from the status of a British colony to that of an independent nation, including the State of Emergency that existed prior to independence. Louis himself was keen to emphasize that he was a "white African" and Richard makes a major point of his role as a Kenyan citizen, who sees his various contributions, including active involvement in the protection of Kenyan wildlife and the establishment of educational facilities through his post of Director of the National Museum in Nairobi, as Kenyan achievements in the fullest sense. In passing, he also makes a number of candid comments about the often negative, but sometimes positive, aspects of Kenya's heritage as a former British colony. In illustration, he wryly notes that the house he built for himself in the suburbs of Nairobi was almost subjected to a demolition order because

the roof timbers, contrary to regulations, were inadequate to support three feet of standing snow!

The main story is that of Leakey's gradual emergence as a leading figure in the field of human paleontology. The book is written with a refreshing combination of frankness about his own occasional shortcomings and relative gentleness regarding those of others, making for pleasant reading as the central story unfolds. One theme that emerges repeatedly is his initial concern about his lack of formal university training. At one point, he was torn between the immediate challenge of pushing ahead with his own productive fossil-hunting and the alternative of delaying everything for three years in order to obtain a degree. In the event, this issue has surely proved to be irrelevant. From his earlier close association with his parents' work and experiences such as preparing and dispatching modern mammal skeletons to institutions all over the world,

Listening to the sky

Colin A. Roman

DUDLEY SAWARD
Bernard Lovell
320pp. Hale. £12.95.
0 7090 17456

The astronomer Bernard Lovell first came to be a household name in the late 1950s and early 60s. Yet, surprisingly, it was only a series of somewhat fortuitous circumstances that transformed this extraordinary man, trained purely as a traditional physicist, into a pioneer radio astronomer. Dudley Saward's biography gives an account of this metamorphosis.

He makes a slow and somewhat uninspiring start, but after this his narrative gathers pace, coming truly to life in his description of Lovell's vital wartime research for the RAF. When we arrive at his achievements after the war, the book becomes an account almost entirely of Lovell's administrative battles: his struggles against officialdom, against the most astoishing governmental apathy, and an inability to others to appreciate what he was trying to achieve. It is true that once peace had come Lovell was forced to expedite a great deal of time and energy in obtaining grants, buying land to extend the nascent radio astronomy observatory at Jodrell Bank, and master-minding the birth and development of a unique 250-foot diameter radio telescope which could be steered to point in any direction in the sky. Of all this Saward gives a telling account

though, strangely, he does not mention the prime irony: the series of government posters under the title "Britain can make it" which included a picture of Jodrell Bank and appeared during the time that Manchester University was still in serious debt because additional public funding for the telescope had been refused.

Yet no scientist spends all his time in administrative wrangles, least of all a pioneer in a new field like Lovell. Lovell received the accolade of FRS for his science, not because his election would be of "signal benefit to the Society" for some other reason, and the biography of a scientist can hardly give a balanced view of its subject if his science is not given sufficient prominence. As I have said, Saward's book is excellent when it comes to Lovell's wartime research - Saward was himself deeply involved in this from the RAF side - but the early work that Lovell did as a postgraduate student and physicist, and later as a radio astronomer, is less satisfactorily handled. Partly this is because Saward lacks a flair for explaining scientific terminology - the text will present no problems to the scientifically literate, but it will to the uninitiated. In addition, too little space is given to radio astronomy and its immense significance; a short chapter setting out the state of astronomy before the advent of pioneers like Lovell, Ryle, Pawsey, and Graham Smith, and giving a glimpse of the revolution they initiated, might have provided a better perspective. It might have helped the balance, too, if there had been mention of the

brilliant achievements of some of Lovell's own research students which would have illustrated something of the stimulating atmosphere at Jodrell Bank and Lovell's generous attitude to their work.

But one can have no grumble about Saward's handling of Lovell's relations with the media. Public relations are vital for the well-being of expensive research projects, and Lovell certainly knew what he was doing in this respect - he always managed to communicate without ever losing control of the situation. His work in this field has paid great dividends, not only for himself but for astronomy in general.

The Culture of Biomedicine: Studies in Science and Culture, Volume 1, edited by D. Heyward Brock and Ann Howard (200pp. University of Delaware Press. £17.95. 0 87413 239 0) includes essays by Michael S. Gregory on "Science and Humanities: Toward a New Worldview", David C. Thomas on "The Goals of Medicine and Society", Richard M. Zaner on "The Phenomenon of Medicine: of Hoaxes and Humor", James E. Trosko on "Scientific Views of Human Nature: Implications for the Ethics of Technological Intervention", Michael Ruse on "The Sociobiology of Human Sexuality: A Progress Report", Von Rensselaer Potter on "Bioethics and the Human Prospect", W. J. Coggins and Peter Graham on "Patients in Particular: Three Cases in Clinical Management", and Dennis Carlson on "Health, Art, and Drama: Underutilized Resources for Improved Quality of Life".

Peculiarly British

John Keegan

ANTHONY READ AND DAVID FISHER
Colonel Z: The life and times of a master of spies
361pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £10.95.
0 340 28910 5

The British look forward to their spy scandals. They expect them at regular intervals and like them to have a predictable shape and content. Spies belong to showbiz and are supposed to add to our stock of harmless pleasures.

It is a matter of astonishment, therefore, that if we do not take our spies seriously, others do. Nazi Germany, Lord Dacre assures us, lived in awe and

despairing admiration of the British Intelligence Service - an organisation which, founded by Edward III and perfected by Oliver Cromwell, had secured the otherwise unaccountable success of British diplomacy and which, operating through the YMCA and the Boy Scout Movement, had overthrown dynasties, altered governments and assassinated ministers throughout the world. To create such a universal, "omnipotent" intelligence service in Germany was his ambitious dream.

The Russians, too, are supposed to hold our spies in awe, the recent Soviet drama being, by one account, an effort to pay them back in kind for unprovoked humiliations inflicted on the KGB all the way from Cambridge Circus to Baker Street by way of Novosibirsk.

Suppose that their reputation abroad for omniscience and omnipotence holds good. What on earth could it be founded on? Rich and ruthless the British may have been once, but not any longer. So it must be some intangible in the national character. A compulsion for mystification seems the most likely quality. The secret of the British of course, is that they are the products of a set of absolutely identical institutions - schools, colleges, universities, the

of court, London clubs - each of which claims to be so totally individual that it does not recognize the others' existence, let alone understand how they work. To Harrovians, Eton is a conspiracy against good government, or at least a fair share of cabinet seats. To Christ Church, Balliol is a red-headed league of bureaucrats bent on undermining their elected ministers. To White's, the Garrick is a gaggle of gossip who know more than they should and broadcast more than they know.

That being the case, is it any wonder that the intelligence services of highly centralized dictatorships such as those of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia should be baffled by the kaleidoscopic quality of British behaviour? Or that Colonel Z - otherwise Sir Claude Dansey - should have seemed to them to embody everything they feared and envied in British mastery of their trade? For Dansey, who the authors of *Colonel Z* assure us was, as its second-in-command, the effective head of the Secret Intelligence Service during the Second World War, had moved through almost every one of those British inner worlds whose mysteries excite the neuroses of decent foreign spies.

Educated at Wellington and then at a private school in Belgium, he was seduced when sixteen by the first male lover of Oscar Wilde. Shipped to the colonies by an outraged father, a colonel of the Life Guards, he served in a succession of regiments and consular jobs - Gifford's Horse, the Lancashire Fusiliers, the South African Light Horse, the British North Borneo Police - before drifting definitively into intelligence. His targets were originally enemies of the empire - the Boers, the Mad Mullahs - but then, for a period spent in the pay of American high finance, the German intelligence organization in the United States. After the Great War he was in and out of public employment, but always in work and under cover, until in 1936 he was set up in his own business, the Z Organization. Think of it: Anthony Read

and David Fisher say, was a parallel body to the Secret Intelligence Service, unknown to it, except through its chief, C, and designed to step into its shoes should war destroy it.

The war did destroy the SIS - in Holland, which was one of its chief listening posts. But it also destroyed the Dutch branch of the Z Organization. So it is surprising to be told that C, Colonel Stewart Menzies, at once made Dansey his assistant. Read and Fisher's explanation is that only thus could C hope to conceal his own errors in the Dutch débâcle; apparently, too, he "knew he was too weak to run SIS on his own". This explanation conveniently allows the authors to represent almost everything that happened under SIS's aegis - or everything, that is, to Dansey's credit - as Dansey's doing. Good relations with the Americans OSS - Dansey; running the Lucy ring for the Russians - Dansey; milking the (highly efficient) Czech service - Dansey; keeping the Gaullists under control - Dansey; extracting escaped prisoners-of-war from the Continent - Dansey. And all done in the course of a daily round which included lunch at the Savoy and dinner at Claridge's.

Dansey died two years after the war ended, leaving behind nothing by which this account of his activities may be verified - except the verdicts on his character by some of his wartime associates. To Malcolm Muggeridge, he was "the only real professional in MI6"; to Lord Dacre he was "corrupt and incompetent"; to Brendan Bracken, "one of the ablest and most single-minded servants England has ever known"; to Edward Crankshaw, "the sort of man who gives spying a bad name". What common thread there? Are they describing the same person? Or merely making us party to how the gossip goes at Peterhouse and Selwyn, the Observer and the Financial Times? Worlds within worlds. One really must be a very baffling country to spy on.

Representing gods and heroes

Hugh Lloyd-Jones

Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae
Volume 1, Aara-Aphlad. Part 1, pp lix + 881; Part 2, pp 57 of index + 699 plates. Volume 2, Aphrodisias-Athena. Part 1, pp xxiii + 1,110; Part 2, pp 88 of index + 439 plates.
Zürich: Artemis. Subscription price, 1,650 Sw fr the pair.
376088751

For many years students of ancient art, no less than students of ancient literature, history and religion, have depended upon the *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* edited by W. H. Roscher (1884-1937). But this work does not cater well for iconography, and its illustrations are sporadic and inadequate. We badly needed a lexicon designed to show the actual state of Greek, Etruscan and Roman iconography, giving attention also to the art of peripheral regions, which would present the entire development of the changing representation of mythological persons and stories from the end of the Bronze Age to the time of the triumph of Christianity, and that is what we are now getting, in the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*.

The project has the support of academies and learned institutions in all countries where such things are cared for, including the British Academy. The elaborate structure designed to supervise its execution, consisting of a Conseil de Fondation, a Comité Scientifique International and a Comité de Rédaction with headquarters in Basel has so far functioned with uncommon speed and effectiveness, thanks in large measure to the daemonic energy of the Secretary-General, Mme Lilly Kahli. The contributors include many of the leading authorities on ancient art, and the lexicon is written in four languages, English, French, German and Italian.

Each article has an introduction, a bibliography, a catalogue of all known representations of the subject, whether these are extant or known from descriptions, and an iconographic commentary. The catalogue presents first the non-narrative and then the narrative images; when the subject figures in a series of episodes, these are set out, so far as this is possible, in chronological order. Where possible, Greek, Etruscan and Roman objects are differentiated, and the items of the catalogue are classified according to the types of object. In the iconographical commentary, the order is determined by the chronology of all the items listed. Where necessary, the connection of the image with the practice of religious cult is explained; literary and epigraphic texts are made full use of, but the artist is placed, rightly, on a technical level. Still, the representations are placed in the literary and religious as well as in the artistic development, and are often related to history, economy and politics.

As an illustration of how the method works, let us take the learned article on Aphrodite, written by Angelos Delivorrias with the assistance of Grati Berger-Doer and Anneliese Kossatz-Deismann. First come the antique likenesses of early date, such as the cult statue of Paphos and its derivatives, and next the herms that depict the goddess. The long third section contains the likenesses of the goddess standing, being followed by sections that show her sitting, riding or crouching; the section devoted to the standing goddess falls into three sections which list works that show her clothed, as she usually is from the fourth century BC, or half-clothed; each of these sections is many times subdivided, so that the principal types can easily be made out and their subdivisions easily recognized. Then comes a selection of heads not easily assignable to any standard type, followed by representations of the goddess by a head or bust. After that come mythological scenes that involve the goddess: her birth, whether she rises from the earth, from the sea, or from a shell; her epiphanies, and other scenes in which she is shown with her attendants; scenes showing her with other gods; scenes showing her with heroes, including the Judgment of Paris and the other episodes of the Trojan story in which she figures; and scenes that present her with her mortal

lovers. After that come likenesses of the goddess in the oriental periphery, and likenesses of the Etruscan goddess Turan, who is identified with her. Within these categories, we are enabled to follow the evolution of the various types with all their subdivisions from the Bronze Age to the victory of Christianity.

We must not be alarmed by the fact that the two double volumes that have appeared have not yet reached the end of the letter A, for the letter A happens to be the initial not only of the great heroes Achilles, Agamemnon, Ajax and Aeneas, as well of such interesting figures as Achelous, Actaeon, Admetus, Adrastus, Aegaeus, Alceste, Alcmena, Alcmaeon, Amphiaras, Amyone, Andromache, Andromeda, Antigone, Antiope and Atalanta, but of five major divinities, Aphrodite, Apollo, Ares, Artemis and Athena. There will be seven double volumes in all. The various gods and heroes are treated not only in their Greek, Etruscan and Roman aspect, but under the forms which they assume in the art of neighbouring cultures in both east and west; thus the article on Aphrodite is supplemented by articles on the Arabian Al-'Uzza and the Etruscan Turan, as well as one on the Syrian goddess Alilat or Atargatis, who is usually identified with her though also with Athena and with Artemis. Even minor divinities and minor heroes find a place, if they are somewhere represented in art; thus we find many local deities, such as eponymous heroes of particular localities. Some deities shown are eccentric, like the Gnostic Abraxas with cock's head and snake-feet. Personified abstractions and allegoriae are included, so that we find Abundantia and Apolauis (Enjoyment), known from mosaics, Apatē (Deception) from an Apulian vase, and the personified Athanasia (Immortality) whom Athena went to fetch to save her dying protégé Tydeus. Gems, coins, mosaics and monuments of late antiquity figure no less than sculpture and paintings on vases and elsewhere; we find also accounts of works of art known to us only from descriptions.

The mode of treatment naturally varies somewhat from one contributor to another; but the work abounds with material which will be precious to students of literature, history and religion, hardly less than to students of ancient and Renaissance art. In some cases contributors, not surprisingly, since their main interest is in art, have missed literary data of some significance; this has happened most of all in the case of papyrus texts published comparatively lately, and it is good to know that future volumes will be checked by a competent papyrologist. Less excusable is the occasional citation of authors in out-of-date editions, most often by some of those contributors who write in French. Inevitably, a work of this kind must be out of date. In certain details even before its publication, and reviewers have already drawn attention to some such cases. But all this does little to detract from the great value of the work. Apart from its contribution to learning, it is most attractive to study, and I was not able to refrain from going right through each volume from start to finish.

The general scheme of the work will not, it must be acknowledged, content every reader. It has been criticized as having been arranged too much in terms of written sources, and for not bearing in mind that iconography is not the mere illustration of a text, but, in the words of Jan Bialostocki, "the adaptation of a formula to the most adequate visually among those that the figurative tradition offers - in regard to the function assigned to it and to its psychological content". Such critics would have preferred a dictionary of iconographic motifs; and in the domain of mythology they would prefer a dictionary of mythological typology to one based upon "individual" mythological figures. Here they invoke the doctrines of the Roman school established by the late Angelo Breghel, which holds that a mythological character has no existence apart from the various episodes in which he figures, and that we should concentrate our study not upon the individual figure of the individual story, but upon the general type under which that figure or that story may be subsumed.

It is true that in the past scholars have often been too ready to assume that an artist must have worked with some particular literary version of the story he was depicting in his mind.

Thus representations of the murder of Agamemnon by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus, and of the later murder of Aegisthus by Agamemnon's son Orestes and his sister Electra, tend to assume a similar pattern, in which a girl is often shown trying to protect the victim. Agamemnon's protector is commonly identified with his daughter Electra, Aegisthus' with his daughter Erigone, and scholars have concluded that there must have been literary versions of the story in which these daughters tried to save their fathers; yet it may well be that they are thus depicted only because the artists found the presence of such a female figure needful to the group they were portraying. Certainly scholars should be more cautious in this respect; but it is still true that many works of art are influenced by Stesichorus' poem about Herakles' battle with

The Poem of Death

Bryan Hainsworth

MARTIN MUELLER
The Iliad
210pp. Allen and Unwin. £15.
004800022
SETH L. SCHEIN
The Mortal Hero: An introduction to Homer's Iliad
232pp. University of California Press. £18.
0520051289

Martin Mueller doesn't call his book an *introduction to the Iliad*, but it can best be read as such, or rather as an introduction to a second reading. Seth L. Schein modestly suggests that *The Mortal Hero* is no more than an introduction, if subtitles are descriptive, but four-fifths of his book are devoted to a single thesis. Introductions to a seminal work of literature have (at a quick count) a threefold role: to explain the conventions of its genre that are incomprehensible or repellent; to discuss the place of the work in the history of its genre; and to steer the reader in the direction of those aspects that give the work its permanent value. Mueller is sound and conscientious on the first of these and has a little to say on the second; Schein is excellent value on the third.

What conventions of Homeric epic perplex the reader? It depends which reader. He who attempts the Greek comes up against one of the most formidable from the first line: the poet's protean, composite form of language. Much indeed follows from this, but neither Schein nor Mueller envisage a readership equipped to tackle the *Iliad* as Homer sang it. Neither accordingly mentions Witte's or Meister's lapidary contributions to the comprehension of the *Kunstsprache* and both begin with Milman Parry and the noun-epithet formula. It would, of course, be impious to do less, though Schein at least seems to discuss formulae on the mountaineering principle, because, they are there, and comments, "Though this conception [of an oral style] may help us to understand the history of the form in which the *Iliad* was created, it does not by itself contribute to literary criticism." Salute him as an honest man.

There is another difficulty also. Both writers assume that their interested general reader has Richmond Lattimore's translation in his hand. But Lattimore, though in some respects very literal, was not consistent in his rendering of epithets, and so obscures the basis of Parry's argument. (Lattimore has "fleet Achilles" and "swift Achilles" - the phrase is the same in Homer - and three different renderings of *podas okhis Achilleus*.) In any case, in reading a translation I do not find the epithets to be a convention that obscures and mystifies, as they are to the Greek. In balladry no one's appreciation is hindered by the redness of the wine the king drank in Dumfermline town; or by the booby features of the Earl of Moray, nor do godlike warriors and great-hearted heroes hinder it in a translated Homer. Repetitions in content are another matter altogether. No translation can conceal them; there is much to be said therefore, from the general reader's point of view, with less on Parry's epithets and more on Fenik's typical scenes and the extensive repetition in content that is such a feature of Homeric and post-Homeric Greek poetry.

Geryon and many groups of vases are influenced by particular Attic dramas.

As for the doctrines of the Roman school, they may easily be pushed too far; it is rewarding to study the mythological type as well as the individual character or story, but such figures as Achilles and Herakles have an individual character which does not vary. It would indeed be useful to have a dictionary of iconographic motifs and of mythological typology; but it is a great deal more useful, for students of ancient and Renaissance art just as much as for students of ancient literature, history and religion, to have a dictionary based, as this one is, upon the individual figures and episodes of mythology. The work is not cheap; but it was right to produce so splendidly a lexicon that will be priceless to scholars for at least a century.

lieve that to repeat oneself is an aesthetic sin. Even Mueller, who has a chapter on battle scenes and for whom the difference between formulaic and non-formulaic repetition is important, has a thin discussion of the thematic element in traditional heroic poetry.

For Schein, however, all this is preliminary; his concern is with the Homeric insight into the plight of man in a world where there is destiny but no salvation. The first item on his agenda is the gods. It ought rather to have been that amorphous fundamental power that lay beyond the gods, *moira* (relegated to an appendix), and its kindred concepts, the vague *doimon* and the shadowy *keryx*, by which is ordained the entire order of things, physical, moral and social. The gods do not run this show; they are part of it. Schein plays down the role of *moira* and attributes the same attitude to Homer. It is true that at this point the poet avoids explicit anthropomorphism and as Virgil brings *fatum* into the foreground. The background is where she belongs, unapproachable and implacable, leaving the front of the supernatural stage to the carefree squabbles of the twelve Olympians. It is their destiny to live for ever without toil, watching with a certain admiration the pathetic struggle of those whose destiny is to toil and die.

Coming to terms with toil was the essence of the didactic poetry of Hesiod; coming to terms with death that of the heroic tradition. Whether Homer held the conventional view, that fame (properly celebrated, of course, in heroic song) was imperishable, is a moot point. There is more than a hint, in a poem whose last significant scene is of two men weeping over the wreckage of their lives, that the honour and achievement of the heroic life is vainly. Schein discusses all this in a bright, racy style: there is sometimes a certain breathlessness, as if every entry in his well-chosen classified bibliography (supplemented by useful notes) had to be summarized in a paragraph. But the message is clear: for this generation the *Iliad* is the Poem of Death. What has happened to that emotion, called by Homer *kharme*: the heroic gusto of those who enjoy their work on the battlefield?

The different tone of Mueller's book is plain from any page; the type (small), the format (close-set), warn us that this is a work of reference, its material arranged under five heads: plot, fighting, similes, gods and mode of composition. A bibliography, much the same as Schein's, is reinforced with comments, but there is no annotation. But it is a work of reference with a thesis. Using a method similar to that exploited by van Thiel (1982), but too late for Mueller's consideration) he separates repetitions that are formulaic from those that are not. These reveal (to no one's surprise) the different stages in the growth of the conception of the *Iliad*. It is an old argument, but spruced up and put in modern dress: so the stages are not mere expansions but incorporate a developing conception of Achilles' heroism and a monumental epic to enshrine it.

It is a happy chance that these two books are so neatly complementary. Together they give a good account of the *Iliad* as seen today in general terms; as for the detail it is rumoured that the presses of both ancient universities have commentators in preparation on both the *Iliad* and its temporarily neglected companion, the *Odyssey*.

A son of the croft

David Fraser

KENNETH KEDDIE
The Gentle Shetlander: The extraordinary story of an artist in the shadows
125pp. Edinburgh: Paul Harris £8.95.
0862280885

Adam Christie was born in 1868, a member of a Shetland fishing and crofting family. His childhood was marked by the death of his mother when he was seven, and the admission of his father to an asylum in Montrose three months later: the elder Christie was detained there for two and a half years, during which Adam was looked after by grandparents. After leaving school at the age of thirteen, clearly regarded as an oddity, he spent his time working on the family croft, reading, ruminating and contributing poems, letters and articles to the *Shetland Times*. These - reproduced in an appendix to Kenneth Keddie's book - show a strong feel for language, whether English or Shetland dialect. They indicate, too, a quirky, original mind and a certain arrogance. They are enjoyable to read and bring their author vividly before the eye - questioning, impatient, cocksure, voluble, with a sharp streak of radical resentment at a world so imperfectly ordered.

Christie was also gifted with his hands. He liked making things, using any medium that was available, employing a nail for an etching tool, a chewed matchstick as a paintbrush, drawing, painting, carving in wood, working in stone. He also enjoyed music and made violins and played them. In 1901 he, like his father, was admitted to the Montrose Asylum with a severe depression, a mental condition which kept him confined in that institution until his death in 1950. He was cared for in an enlightened way and appears to have been well-liked. In the asylum - The Sunnyside Royal Hospital - he carved, sculpted and worked hard with his hands: but he wrote no more.

Obsequial behaviour

Angus Calder

ANNE GORDON
Death Is For The Living
174pp. Edinburgh: Paul Harris. £7.50.
0862280893

Anne Gordon is a judicious antiquarian, and her absorbing study of Scottish funeral customs casts torchbeams from unfamiliar angles into the country's social history. On Skye, in the early nineteenth century, a writer noted that during wakes "such a quantity of meat and drink was distributed as kept the nearest surviving relatives for several years in the greatest poverty . . .". The "wisdom of funeral laws" had sought to restrict prodigality at the lyke-wakes of the poor and the obsequies of the great, with an Act about Banqueting and Apparel of 1621. But twelve years later the first Earl of Buccleuch was buried at Hawick with



Cannan Estate employees and crafters, 1885. Reproduced from *The story of a Hebridean Island* (323pp. Oxford University Press. £25. 0199201374) by J. L. Campbell who presented the Isle of Cannan to the National Trust for Scotland in 1981 after forty three years of ownership. The book will be reviewed shortly in the TLS.

In telling Christie's story Keddie (and George Mackay Brown in a foreword) make high claims. Adam is described as "unique personality": as a natural artist of extraordinary gifts: as an artist of "nascent genius". Evidence to support this is scant. Christie's stone heads (which Keddie interestingly connects to pre-Christian Celtic influences, conscious and unconscious) are, to judge by the photographs, strong and primitive but little more. His poetry was unoriginal, but at its best not without felicity; the vernacular being stronger than the English; and his prose was clear and grammatical, albeit expressing unremarkable ideas and perceptions. None of this persuades the reader of anything approaching genius. Adam comes through as likeable, unusual and, no doubt, with a sensitive mind for which life proved too much.

The Gentle Shetlander, written in a tiresome button-holing style, ("allow me to set the scene

for you") abounds in social commentary. Keddie refers with disapprobation (which he ascribes, by supposition, to Christie) to the fact that of forty-nine hospital managers of Sunnyside ten were lairds, including two earls: this may have been deplorable or it may have indicated particular public spirit among the landed proprietors of Angus. Sitting on hospital Boards of Management is rarely a form of self-indulgence. There is a good deal of this sort of thing, which will arouse sympathy or promote irritation dependent on the reader's cast of mind. The story, however, is an interesting one, and the book's most impressive point is made almost without the author appearing to notice: that is, how a hard-working crofting lad who left school at thirteen had the learning, the love of books, the skill and the leisure to write as Adam Christie wrote. No genius, perhaps; but the society which produced this articulation had much of which to be proud.

beside others on consecrated ground.

In a people who still believed in the physical resurrection of the dead, the disruption of body-snatching in the 1820s produced widespread social trauma. It exposed a significant conflict between "superstitious" instinct and scientific rationalism. The *Edinburgh Courier* coolly pointed out that if the City's Medical School was to exist at all, anatomical "subjects must be procured" - so what about imports from abroad, or native criminals? But meanwhile mobs gathered to assault anyone who gave the least sign of anticipating God as "resurrectionist", like one unfortunate street porter spotted carrying into a medical building what proved to be the corpse of a llama from a menagerie.

Despite the Anatomy (Scotland) Act of 1832 which regulated the dissection of bodies before burial, grave-watching persisted in some parts of the mid-century, abetting that Scottish interest in the macabre which still flavours the country's literary culture.

the advent of the Improvers - lairds who, disenchanted by Jacobite failure, looked to the English political-economic renaissance and determined to bring prosperity to their lands.

Although Cameron's sympathies lie in the main with the common man and his way of life epitomized in the bothy ballad (or cornlister), he acknowledges the immense benefits brought by Improvers such as Grant of Monymusk who created a home farm especially in order to demonstrate his innovations to his tenants, importing techniques, men and machines from the south where he had been an MP at Westminster: as Cameron puts it, "a member of the oldest of farming clubs, the House of Commons". The vogue for improvement spread and enclosures began to provide the security of tenure necessary to raise the fertility of soil through draining, dunging and regular rotations. Policy lands were landscaped by Scottish surveyors who were doubtless influenced by Repton and Brown; barren moors were planted with millions of trees. The lairds had to face strong conservatism in the old farmhouses and negotiations often ended in the

eviction of families who would not exchange but by the nineteenth century the lairds' furious activities had brought a new settlement to the countryside.

Cameron not only provides a factual account of a disappearing way of life but also a lyrical celebration of hardship, labours and affections of the baillie, the ploughman and the orraman. He laments the loss of skills and tools which kept men close to nature and it is difficult not to agree with him that today's relatively prosperous, mechanically-minded farmworker, distanced from the soil by his heated cab, radio and five-furrow plough, often, lacks his forebear's versatility and imaginative, commonsensical approach to the land. Our cavalier treatment of nature may, as Cameron warns, "in the end be unwise".

The Cornlister Days contains good photographs which record pre-tractor farming as well as an adequate glossary and the Doric is used sparingly enough not to bore the Sassenach reader; the Scot and the scholar would appreciate an index, for the book is a valuable contribution to social history.

Way out West

Gerald Mangan

ALASDAIR MACLEAN
Night Falls on Ardnamurchan: The twilight of a crofting family
223pp. Gollancz. £9.95.
0575034602

Night Falls on Ardnamurchan appears after a decade of near silence on the part of Alasdair MacLean, a Scottish poet now in his late fifties whose first collection *From the Wilderness* established his reputation in 1973. In that year, both of his parents died on the remote West Highland croft where he had grown up, and he conceived this prose memoir "as a debt of conscience" to commemorate them and their vanishing way of life. Written mostly *in situ* on the westernmost point of Ardnamurchan, a peninsula more inaccessible than many Hebridean islands, it is both a documentary record of crofting life as it was lived there by generations of MacLeans, and a broodingly introspective requiem for it.

Its backbone is a series of extracts from his father's journals for the years 1960 and 1970, a laconic daily "log" whose entries are dominated by the treacherous Atlantic weather. MacLean fleshes out this skeleton with a very full commentary, which spares no details of a crofting family's everyday hardships. Growing crops in shallow soil, rearing sheep and cattle, cutting peat, building and mending shelters, gathering shellfish and solvage, his father emerges as both hero and victim in a perennial struggle against poverty and the elements: "a complex, moody, introverted man, capable of great natural charm", who works himself to the bone while cosseting his sheep, his dogs and his temperamental car.

This would be enough to dispel any lingering urban illusions of a Highland idyll, but MacLean makes certain indeed that his account will not appeal to the Scottish Tourist Board. Although he acknowledges the consolations of the wilderness, the shafts of sunlight are mainly in the past tense, and serve to accentuate the prevailing gloom. We are reminded of the price paid by the natives to absentee landlords, grasping ferry-operators, parasitic bureaucrats, and the inclement god of the Presbyterian Church. The landscape he paints is one depopulated by the Highland Clearances, defoliated by the sheep, deserted annually by its youth, and degraded by local souvenir-vendors - a desert maintained by civilization as a playground for tourists and the military.

"Our like will not be seen again", the mournful refrain of Thomas O'Crobbain's *The Islandman*, is very much MacLean's own burden in this book; but his elegiac tones are far more bitter, and often quite shrill with rage. When he considers the amount of "imagination, effort and capital" required to reinvigorate his own moribund parish, his pessimism is often fully justified. But its sources are also deeply personal, and we see this with increasing clarity in the pages of his own 1979-80 journal, which make up the latter half of the book. As a confirmed bachelor who uses his pen to oust a tragic sense of solitude ("I have contracted a marriage with the dark aide of my being, the poetry slide"), MacLean's self-portrait is much too self-absorbed to convince the reader of any real concern for the community. Conspicuously absent from the record, along with a sense of hope or humour, is a sense of other people.

Chronic isolation is a large part of his subject, in fact, and his Victorian prose-style is probably one of its side-effects - an ornate and slow-moving vehicle for a good deal of ponderous cogitation and gratuitous self-exposure. ("Life is long and, interpose what steel we care to, yet will our breasts be bare to some of its arrows, childish flesh and adult aqualy pocked . . ."). There are dark hints of mental illness in his restless youth, and his confessions of guilt, resentment and shame towards his family are unmistakable evidence of adolescent traumas delayed into late middle-age. A despondent epilogue, which details his present existence as a lonely town-dweller, leaves us in no doubt that many of the shadows gathering on the moor are those he brought with him, and has carried away with him again.

Library of a vanished state

Timothy Garton Ash

"Pouvez-vous à 6?" wrote Frederick the Great to Voltaire, who smartly replied "G a", and came to sup at Sinsouci. There the punter-poetaster King, the self-styled "Philosoph of Sanssouci", would regale Voltaire, in bad French, with the latest additions to his Royal Library. Alas, he also offered for criticism his own precious verses. "See", said Voltaire, "what a quantity of his dirty linen the King has sent me to wash!" It could not last. Voltaire took a cold farewell and a volume of the King's poetry. At Frankfurt, Prussian agents arrested him, confined him (Macaulay tells us) for twelve days in a wretched hovel, and retrieved the precious volume.

So it was in old Prussia. So it was for the "Prince-Elector's Library" (Churfürstliche Bibliothek), opened in 1661; for the "Royal Library", from 1701; and for the "Prussian State Library", from 1818. What the state gave with one hand, it took away with the other. What it built by its patronage it destroyed by its politics. And so today the Prussian State Library, like Germany itself, is divided between East and West.

In East Berlin, Unter den Linden, stands the original pre-1914 library. A great, square slab of grey sandstone with pompous historicist detailing, it was slung out by Hitler in *Mein Kampf* as an example of the kind of architecture he admired. Today, however, your attention is drawn in the cloakroom to *Wladimir Iljitsch Lenin in Berlin und als Leser der Königlichen Bibliothek, der heutigen Deutschen Staatsbibliothek* - "Lenin as reader in the Royal Library, today's German State Library" - a gripping historical romance; hurry, while stocks last. Lenin in hand, you walk past a tarmac in the porter's box (*Ausweis, bitte!*) up the gloomy stone staircase, and along ochre-coloured corridors smelling of cheap disinfectant, to the catalogue rooms.

In West Berlin, the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz (State Library of Prussian Cultural Property) is a large, gleaming, ultra-modern building, conceived by the architect Hans Scharoun as a brother to the nearby Philharmonie concert hall. Like the Philharmonie, its outward form is meant to express its inner functions "organically". Resolutely and rigorously asymmetrical, as if in conscious opposition to the awful symmetry of its East Berlin counterpart, the interior reveals an ascending series of large, light open-plan spaces, all plush carpet and *décor brut* - vaguely reminiscent of the National Theatre foyers.

In the reading rooms, the bookshelves are carefully arranged in small clusters, so as not to spoil the view, and a student can peruse the beautiful people all the way from *Ostfriesland* to *Österreich*. If he or she should tire of reading, books can be borrowed, or photocopied at will, or used as conversation-starters in the elegant canteen, with its fine view of the Berlin Wall.

In the portland East there are no such distractions. But puritanism extends to the selection of books. Looking through the card catalogues you may stumble on "Bahro, Rudolf, *Die Alternative: Zur Kritik d. real. existierenden Sozialismus*", or "Stone, Norman, *The Eastern Front*". Besides the signature number of the latter, it says: "W", beside the former.

"ASF" stands for *wissenschaftliche Benutzung* - "scholarly use", which means in practice, only for academic researchers. And "ASF" The Section for Special Research Literature (*Abteilung für spezielle Forschungsliteratur*) is a discreet little reading room which contains everything the state considers "dangerous". Such rooms are popularly known as *Gefährdenke* - "poison cupboard". Only specially trusted individuals, or already poisoned foreign visitors, are granted access. In its glass-fronted cupboards, the complete *Volkskammer Beabachter* stands next to bound rows of *Der Spiegel* and *stern*; Bahro's *Alternative* next to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*; John Toland's biography of Hitler, beside Stefan Heym's novel about East German Stalinism.

When I worked there as a graduate student, dyspeptic turning the pages of Nazi newspapers on grey winter afternoons, an Indian Communist professor sat in the next table, forlornly reading the previous week's *Times* (poison, of course). Sometimes we were joined by

a senior officer of the Wachregiment Felix Dzierzynski - the guard regiment of the Ministry for State Security. He worked his way steadily through glossy piles of Western military journals, colour magazines and arms brochures, occasionally licking his lips, knees pressed firmly together, like a middle-aged biker in a porno-shop. When I returned to the library this year, as a confessed journalist, I asked one of the library's senior administrators what purpose the "ASF" classification served. "Well, I'll give you an example", he said. "Just recently we received a book about sexual perversions - and the publishers themselves requested that this should not be made generally available. The 'ASF' is for things like that

The catalogues in West Berlin hold no such hidden terrors. However, until recently they didn't hold many of their books either. In one of those mind-jerking absurdities which are Berlin's stuck in trade, librarians had to telephone to the State Library in East Berlin to find the signature, and hence the location of volumes in their own stacks, in West Berlin - for the old catalogues remained in the old building. Now West Berlin has finished re-cataloguing the displaced volumes; and the whole of the old alphabetical catalogue - to 1974 - should soon be available in microform.

It happened like this. When British bombs began to fall on Berlin in 1940, the Prussian State Library decided to evacuate its most valuable holdings to safe storage places across the Reich. By the end of the war, there were twenty-nine evacuation sites, of which six proved to be in territory occupied by the Western allies and twenty-three in the East. Some 1.7 million volumes "made their way to West Germany", as the West Berlin library brochure puts it - nicely suggesting refugees from the Red Army: exhausted old Baedekers in tattered red cloth, wheezing through the Harz mountains, the Brothers Grimm, pulling their *Nachlass* in a pram, stately von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, with nothing but what he could carry in his appendices. . . . Eventually they made their way, via Marburg and Tübingen, to Hans Scharoun's *Bücherdampfer* (book-ship) in Tiergarten, less than a mile away from their old home on Unter den Linden; and here, for the time being, their *Wanderjahre* would seem to have ended.

East Berlin wants them back. Not content

with the 6.5 million or so volumes which remained in Berlin or were returned from Eastern evacuation sites, the "German State Library" claims the 1.7 million refugees "illegally detained in West Berlin" as its own citizens. Its own anachronistic title, "German State Library", stakes out that claim (for where is the German State?) Its lawyers cite a UN resolution to the effect that art works should be returned to their pre-war locations. The West Berlin lawyers retort that Germany did not fight Germany, and the resolution is therefore inapplicable. Instead, the disputed volumes are held in trust, like all the former "cultural properties" of the Prussian State, by the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz (Foundation for Prussian Cultural Property). Hence the almost equally anachronistic title "State Library of Prussian Cultural Property". When Germany is reunited, all these double bookings will be sorted out.

Meanwhile, they live in peaceful coexistence. West Berlin has the Gutenberg Bible, the magnificent collection of Oriental manuscripts, and, ironically enough, a large holding of East European literature. East Berlin has a fragment of the first Latin Bible, the Prince-Elector's Atlas, and the great bulk of pre-war general and reference books. West Berlin has filled many of its lacunae by acquiring second-hand or facsimile copies, and is excellently furnished with post-war reference literature. East Berlin has fallen behind with the latter, because the state cannot afford the necessary hard currency. (Like Frederick the Great, Erich Honecker spends too much on his army.) But East Berlin can borrow its former treasures on Inter-Library Loan, and, despite its legal claims, it scrupulously returns them. West Berlin acts as a centre for the allocation of ISBNs - including those for East Germany. Their civil claims are irreconcilable; but life and scholarship must go on, so Prussia's heirs have found a tenuous *Modus vivendi*.

There is, however, one further twist to this Central European family history. It concerns one of the most valuable consignments evacuated during the war - 505 crates containing about a quarter of all Mozart's music known to have survived in manuscript, the score of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the papers of Alexander von Humboldt, the Varnhagen collection, and much more besides. In 1945 this consignment was known to be stored in a

medieval monastery at Grüssau, in Upper Silesia. Then it disappeared. For three decades, scholars hunted the length and breadth of Central Europe. (The story of their search is ably told in Nigel Lewis's *Pimperose*, published by Hamish Hamilton in 1981.) Then, in the early 1970s, the Library's last secret seeped out. The priceless consignment had, it seems, been carried away from that German monastery by the advancing Polish army in 1945 - and the Poles had concealed their find from the world. Why? "After all", Dr Bernhard Vesper, Director General of the West Berlin State Library exclaims, "they would have been quite justified if they had said in 1945: 'We are taking this as reparation for the terrible damage you have done to Poland, no one could have fairly protested.' (Not the kind of remark one heard in East Berlin - where the State Library administrator declined to discuss the matter at all.) Dr Vesper suspects the Poles must have wanted to conceal their find, not from the West, but from the Soviet Union - which made a habit of snatching up the best "reparations" for itself.

Whatever the reason, it was only in 1977 that the Polish Press Agency (PAP) announced, with its customary frankness, that "systematic and scrupulous search has recently been rewarded with a successful result". In May of that year, Edward Giersek flew to East Berlin to sign a Treaty of Friendship. He took with him seven scores from the "recently discovered" collection, including *The Magic Flute* and Beethoven's Ninth. "Alle Menschen werden Brüder!" explained a headline in the East German Party daily *Neues Deutschland*, as Giersek "handed back" these masterpieces of socialist humanism. The librarians on Unter den Linden measured up the space for the rest of the hoard. But they are still waiting. Perhaps the Poles were (are?) holding out for the return of Polish national treasures in exchange. Perhaps it was just the dramatic worsening of relations between Poland and the GDR after the emergence of Solidarity. In any case, the rest of the contents of those 505 crates are now open to readers at the Jagiellonian Library in Kraków, to the delight of many western scholars, and the silent fury of the East Berlin librarians.

West Germany has formally advised Poland of its rights and interest in these Prussian relics. Poland may now play off Prussia's heirs against each other. "Alle Menschen werden Brüder", indeed.

In Seville), while another important book, Avicenna's *Libri quinque canonis medicinarum*, the first edition in the original Arabic, printed in Rome at the Typographia Medicea in 1593, went to the same buyer for £4,860.

Christie's, New York, were selling on December 14 an assortment of books, manuscripts and Americana, of which undoubtedly the most interesting was the original autograph manuscript of Gauguin's Tahitian journal, *Noo Noa*, some thirty-eight pages of large folio text with four small sketches. This is the record of Gauguin's first encounter with Tahiti and of the impact of the island and its people upon his artistic consciousness: "I was enchanted by golden forms glimpsed in streams. Why did I hesitate to pour over my canvas all this gold and this celebration of sunlight?" The text was reworked and edited by his friend, Charles Morice, first appeared in *La Revue blanche* in 1897 and was expanded into book form in 1901. Gauguin re-copied the book version of his journal in an illustrated manuscript which is now in the Cabinet des Dessins in the Louvre whereas the Christie's manuscript is the original, untouched record. It was sold for \$132,000 to Ars Libri, while a private Swiss collector paid \$33,000 for the twenty-eight-page autograph manuscript of Gauguin's essay on art and artists, "Racontars de Rapin", written of Autocon in the Marquesas Islands in September 1902.

Also up for sale was a letter by Beardsley to John Lane of the *Yellow Book* about the rejection for the first issue of his drawing, "The Fort Woman", on the grounds of its marked resemblance to Whistler's wife. The unrepentant artist pleads for the inclusion of his drawing and suggests a title for it: "A Study in Major Lines", which is certainly intended as another

Whistler tease. Written c March 1894 and illustrated with a pen-and-ink portrait of Beardsley pointing tearfully to a hangerman's noose, the letter made \$13,200 to a New York collector.

A vehement letter about Bret Harte from Mark Twain to William Dean Howells was sold with another on the same subject to an anonymous buyer for \$6,050. Appalled at the prospect of Harte being appointed a consul, Twain implores Howells to use his influence with President Rutherford Hayes to prevent it: "I think your citizenship lays the duty upon you of doing what you can to prevent the disgrace of literature & the country which would be the infallible result of the appointment of Bret Harte to any responsible post. Wherever he goes his wake is tumultuous with swindled grocers, & with defrauded innocents who have loaned him money. . . . He can lie faster than he can drive false patates [potatoes]. He is always steeped in whisky & brandy; he gets up in the night to drink it cold."

Among the other Americana a three-page letter by Thomas Paine, Philadelphia, October 17, 1780, to General Nathaniel Greene, speculating on Benedict Arnold's treason and the execution of Major André (previously sold in the Sang-sala at Sotheby's in 1978), made \$20,000 to a private collector, while the Friends of the Vermont State House acquired for \$14,300 an important letter by George Washington, dated February 11, 1783, discussing the possible use of the Army against the movement for an independent state of Vermont. Lastly there was a sad little object, an autograph of Sitting Bull, authenticated "My Wilkes Bro. was clerk in the fort at Randall at the time Sitting Bull was a prisoner there, & he loaned Sitting Bull to write his name."

It was sold for \$2,750 to Scriptorium

Letters

'God Knows'

Sir, - Your eccentric reviewer writes of Joseph Heller's *God Knows* (November 23): "Why do they do it, these major, sexy, sensitive, Jewish American novelists? Why do they beetle off into the grandest parts of the past in search of *Ancient Evenings*, or *Creation*, or - *God Knows*?" Although I am, demonstrably, major, sexy, sensitive, American, and the author of *Creation*, I am not, demonstrably, Jewish, as your readers were once instructed by Pearl Kazin Bell, who depicted me as a beleaguered WASP, allegedly distressed by the Jewish conquest of American culture.

GORE VIDAL
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American Feminism

Sir, - I see that Christopher Hitchens (American Notes, November 16) has again attacked American feminists by using innuendo and misrepresentation. He claims that four publishers have refused Kingsley Amis's *Stanley and the Women* because of censorship by "influential feminists". Surely the readers of the *TLS* know that there are more than four publishers in New York, and that any one of dozens of publishers might have accepted the book. Why then this unsubstantiated accusation? It reminds me of excuses given by chairmen of departments in American universities a few years back. Male job candidates were informed that they had not been hired because "a woman had to be hired", under the illusion that this was a gentler way to refuse a candidate than the truth.

MARTHA VICINUS
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Irish Landlords

Sir, - To adapt a phrase of Major Yeates's, I am a bit of a revisionist myself, but David Cannadine goes too far in his review of K. Theodore Hoppen's *Elections, Politics, and Society in Ireland 1832-1885* (December 7) when he says that in recent writing Irish landlords have been rehabilitated and their reputations restored. Not only has this not happened;

it could not happen, not in the sweeping manner Cannadine suggests. In 1903, Frederick Wrench, who knew all about it, told Arthur Balfour that "since the passing of the Land Act of 1881, with very few exceptions, the landlords have ceased to spend any money on improvements. Lord Longford, Lord Fitzwilliam and Lord Leconfield are about the only exceptions. . . possibly Lord Kilmaine."

As for Cannadine's statement that "they evicted tenants very rarely", this is to go much further than the chief reviser of eviction statistics, Barbara Solow.

Not wishing to multiply examples, I will add that to oust landlords of all wrong-doing is to imply that as a class they were a monolith, the error fallen into by all who condemn the landlords as a class. Cannadine is of course right to say that they did disappear as landowners, but this had little to do with Gladstone, whose legislation to protect tenants left them as tenants still. The landlords were bought out through a series of enactments introduced by Tory governments, culminating in George Wyndham's act of 1903, with the remnants removed after 1922.

CHARLES DAVIDSON
Keatht, Co Cork, Irish Republic.

The Essence of Swissness

Sir, - We can be grateful that psychopathology is no longer regarded as the well-spring of genius. It is however somewhat disconcerting to find that George Steiner (December 7) by contrast invokes the "disciplined mediocrity" of Switzerland as leading to "enforced or chosen" privacy and thus to insanity for Swiss intellectuals such as Adolf Wölfli.

Wölfli was a farm-hand, gardener and gravedigger who never demonstrated any special interest in painting or writing until some years after he was interned in the Waldau asylum for paedophilia. He was subsequently diagnosed as schizophrenic. Only after being placed in the hospital did he commence the extraordinary corpus which places him, alone among "psychotic artists", in the first rank of twentieth-century painters. To comment on his mental illness is not to belittle his work, still

less to explain it. Nevertheless, it is rather stretching matters to regard the illness as a form of, specifically Swiss, strangled artistic endeavour; on the contrary it appears to have made his subsequent work possible.

ROLAND LITTLEWOOD
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James Gibbs

Sir, - In his review of Terry Friedman's book on James Gibbs (November 30) Sir John Summerson draws attention to the striking but un-influential "dosseret" entablatures in St Martin-in-the-Fields, and asks, "where did Gibbs get this idea?"

After their introduction by Brunelleschi, dosseret entablature blocks achieved some currency in Italy, especially in Tuscany during the second half of the fifteenth century, and not only inside churches but also in porticos, loggias, cloisters and courtyards. L. B. Alberti (*De re aedificatoria*, VII, 15) did not condemn the idea. It was employed more than once by Giuliano da Sangallo, and at Milan by Bramante. It appears also in the background architecture of contemporary paintings by, among others, Francesco di Giorgio (who devoted a note to it in his *Trattato*). But its popularity scarcely survived the quattrocento. We find it being used again in Spain in the mid-sixteenth century in a series of impressive "column churches" (eg. those of Getafe, Callosa de Segura, Mancha Real) and, one might add, on piers in the great cathedrals of Granada, Jaén, Puebla (Mexico), etc. but again this was only a fashion of short duration without subsequent influence. In France the motif was given publicly by Philibert Delorme who illustrated it in his *Architecture* (Paris, 1567), but with little or no result in actual buildings. That Gibbs was inspired by any of these examples is not of course completely impossible, but is surely most unlikely.

Turning to ancient Roman precedents, the half-ruined portico near the theatre of Marcellus, important for Renaissance architects and recorded by, among others, Giuliano da Sangallo, had long disappeared by the time Gibbs was in Rome. On the other hand, he is certain

to have seen Sonta Costanza just outside the city, which has a series of dosserets supported by twin columns. This building not only enjoyed the general prestige of antiquity but was also endowed for architects with an exemplary status by virtue of the prominence given to it in Serlio's third book, Palladio's fourth, Marliani's *Topographia*, Desgodetz's *Edifices antiques*, etc. I myself have little doubt that this was the source which Gibbs "quoted" in St Martin's.

It is a pity, as your reviewer remarks, that Professor Friedman did not pursue the subject of dosserets, if only because reconsideration is long overdue of their justification based on the notion of "active" and "inactive" architectural parts (Ludwig Heydenreich, *Spätwerke Brunelleschi's: Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, LII, 1931, p14). According to this theory the dosseret is an inactive part which fulfils the need in a balanced design to separate two active parts, the column and the arch; but it seems doubtful whether such an explanation can be convincingly reconciled with the repeated failures of the motif to persist and establish itself - in England as well.

J. B. BURY
13 Lingfield Road, London SW19.

William Empson

Sir, - In his review of a recent collection of essays by Sir William Empson (November 23), Jonathan Culler speaks of the desirability of an enterprising publisher collecting *inter alia* Empson's essays on Donne, Webster and Jonson. Your readers may be interested to know that, prior to his death, Empson was planning to reissue a number of his uncollected essays on Shakespeare and Renaissance literature with us. These essays are now being prepared for publication by Dr David Prie of the University of Manchester. They will be issued in two volumes: the first, devoted to Shakespeare, will appear to the spring of 1986; the second, devoted to a number of other Renaissance writers, including Donne, Webster and Jonson, should be published by 1987.

TERENCE MOORE
Cambridge University Press, Edinburgh Building,
Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge.

Behind the lines

Robert Hewison

Next month sees the opening moves in a trial that will prove to be the most important test case for literary censorship since John Calder finally won his battle to publish Hubert Selby's *Last Exit to Brooklyn* in 1968. It is important

because it is not being heard under the Obscene Publications Act, which in practice has led to the end of significant literary censorship, but under the Customs Consolidation Act of 1876 (forbidding the import of "indecent or obscene material"), together with subsequent legislation controlling the importing of books and magazines.

In April 1984 Customs officers raided the Gay's the Word bookshop in Bloomsbury, and the homes of three of its directors. They took away quantities of documents and a good proportion of the shop's stock. In June the shop was given notice of "seizure" of twenty-two imported titles on the grounds that they were "indecent or obscene". By then it was also clear that the Customs were holding up deliveries of books ordered by the shop from abroad. Some £12,000 worth of stock was held up in this way. During this period at least four other bookshops which sold literature of interest to homosexuals were either raided or had stock seized in transit.

Following "Operation Tiger", codename for the raid on Gay's the Word, Customs and Excise had thirty-three officers (presumably a literary version of the "pretty police") read through the seized material, and some of the titles, well thumbed, were returned to the shop. At one point it looked as though as many as 34 separate titles would be involved in any proceedings, but it now appears that seventy-two titles are regarded as contentious. It was not until November that Customs and Excise formally charged eight people connected with

Gay's the Word. There is one general charge of conspiracy to import "indecent or obscene material". The case is listed for January 7, but the eight, who are being advised by the National Council for Civil Liberties, will exercise their right to jury trial, and that may not take place until the end of the year.

Of the seventy-two titles still regarded as contentious, several have been published in this country, and none of these has any trouble with the law. Among them are *Aphrodite*, an anthology that includes Tennessee Williams, Edmund White and Kate Millet, published by Chatto and Windus, Carter Wilson's *Treasures on Earth*, published by Michael Joseph, Genet's *Querelle de Brest*, published by Granada, and the meditations of a fifteenth-century nun, published by Picador.

Of course, not all the titles involved are pearls of literature - but literary merit is not at issue. The Obscene Publications Act allows for such a defence; the Customs Consolidation Act does not. The only issue is what is actually meant by "indecent or obscene". The prosecution may therefore seem finely calculated to persecute minority sexual tastes.

If Customs and Excise are successful it will be illegal to import books which are available here in public libraries in identical editions; indeed their officers have been behaving as though this were so. It may not have been their intention to produce this legal absurdity but rather, with their raids and seizures, to put pressure on a particular sexual minority. To this, through the disruption and anxiety they have caused, Customs and Excise have already been successful, regardless of the outcome of a case that may still not be known twelve months from now.

Annual reports are notorious for concealing more than they reveal, but it would be difficult to match the audacity of the Literature Department's contribution to the Arts Council report for 1983/84. This most recent account of the department's activity proudly announces the initiation of a "three year development programme" for writers' fellowships. In 1983 the number of fellowships did indeed double, to eighteen, but the report makes no mention of what has happened after that. In this, the second year of the plan, the number of fellowships has in fact declined to fifteen, and in the third and final year of the development programme, there will be no writers' fellowships at all, a fact that was well known before the report was released. With mathematics like that, it is not surprising that the Literature Department and its Director seem to be disappearing like the Cheshire Cat.

The launching of Penguin in 1935 may not have been - as their founder Allen Lane liked to claim - as important as the invention of radio, but the firm's cultural influence has certainly been greater than that of the Third Programme of the BBC. As Lane's successors tot up a total of some two million Orwell volumes sold in 1984, we can prepare ourselves for an even bigger celebration of the firm's fiftieth anniversary in 1985.

Lane issued his first ten paperback reprints, price sixpence, on July 30, 1935, an odd time to publish forced on him by delays. Following conventional publishing wisdom, Penguin will not be launching their celebrations until September 19, when they will issue a boxed set of facsimiles of the first ten (costing a lot more than 5 shillings), and a separate issue of Penguin No 1, *Ariel*, by André Malraux.

The main focus of the celebrations will be an exhibition at the Festival Hall. It is not intended to show every one of the 18,000 Penguin and related titles, and anyway the firm does not possess a complete set of its publications. The notorious collection of blasphemous cartoons by Siné (with an introduction by Malcolm Muggeridge), the bulk of which edition was destroyed by Allen Lane in a private act of censorship in 1966, will be on display, together with some of Penguin's printing gaffes, including *Exile and the Kingdom*, by one Albert Acmus, which sold 1,500 copies in 1970. The exhibition organizers are particularly anxious to trace examples of the special Penguin editions produced for prisoner-of-war camps in Germany and Italy.

With a BBC documentary, a charity book auction, the launch of three new Penguin series and the relaunch of others, 1985 will be Penguin year, and I have a copy of the privately produced Penguin diary to prove it. Sadly, they no longer sell the Penguin fountain pen to write in it.

As we go to press, it has just been announced that Ted Hughes is to be the new Poet Laureate. We congratulate him, and those responsible for an unexpected, enterprising and very welcome choice for the job, and we look forward to reading the poems, occasional or otherwise, of Mr Hughes's laureateship: his age - fifty-four - and his already stated view that "for me the crown is the symbol of the unity of the tribe, the spiritual unity", indicate that it will be a long and unusually interesting one. Readers interested to know more of the history and fortunes of the laureateship are referred to Claude Ransom's article "Poets Laureate and their work" in the *TLS* of July 27.

COMMENTARY

Problems of power

Stephen Wall

SHAKESPEARE
Coriolanus
Olivier Theatre

"What is the city but the people?" asks one of the Tribunes at the heart of the political debate in *Coriolanus*. It is a resonant question which loses a good deal of its force in the new production at the National Theatre because another has been substituted for it which asks: what is the people but the audience? John Birt's set provides the massive gate which the action of the play requires, but flanks it with tiered seating reserved for spectators who are intermittently brought down to the sand-strewn acting area to hulk out the rather small number of citizens that are presumably all the National's budgets can run to (its own resources constrained by a government unsympathetic to popular demonstration). Such workshop procedures may look hospitable and may indeed have some theoretical point, but in practice they deprive the production of political seriousness. A hungry mob denouncing corn at their own price is one thing, and a miscellaneous group of theatregoers who have only just finished reading their programmes is another, even if they do begin to join in after an Act or two. They may after all not know the text too well and perhaps the idea was that such unfamiliarity with the outcome would strengthen the feeling of a *tensio* public meeting which might go either way. In the theatre, however, spontaneity can hardly be achieved without rehearsal.

It is a surprising miscalculation for Peter Hall to have made. He directed Olivier's celebrated 1959 performance, and he may well have felt the need to try something different from the relatively orthodox Stratford approach of his earlier production. But the new method is something to which the Olivier auditorium seems highly resistant. Although there is much running up and down the aisles, with trumpets playing Baroque fanfares to the right and to the left of it, the audience remains stubbornly uninvolved in the action, despite the inscription of some of its numbers on stage postages.

The professional players are in everyday clothes and this allows them to mingle with the amateurs from the terraces without too much sense of discrepancy, but modern dress also brings expectations of political urgency which do not materialize. The last few months have given most of us some idea of what an angry crowd of people fighting for what they believe to be their rights actually looks like. Period costume might have deflected those comparisons with the real world of the pickets which are so much to this production's disadvantage at this time. The format of this *Coriolanus* disables it from coming convincingly to grips with those areas of the play which are so abnormally concerned with the realities, responsibilities and distribution of political power. *Coriolanus* has often been subjected to updating, but here the revisionism is undermined by inconsistencies of detail. The contemporaneity suggested by battle-dress, off-stage sirens, and the use of rifles is out of phase with the use of sword and shield in the big *Coriolanus/Aufidius* fight (done with exciting sound-effects) in Act 1. The opportunist eclecticism of the production's style means it seems to take place in a political vacuum. The intelligent projection of the play's debates is not helped either by performances in the ensemble which are mostly no more than adequate.

The insubstantiality of Rome as a felt society leaves *Coriolanus* himself looking particularly exposed, and the divide between hero and state is accentuated by the histrionic self-assertion of Ian McKellen's performance, which overvoluntarism all competition except that of Irene Worth's excellent Volumnia. Miss Worth has the advantage of having recently played the same role for the BBC's television *Coriolanus*, in which her performance was notable for its subtlety of psychological detail. In the Olivier, she rightly expends her effects; she handles her great Act V pleading with her son with the same authoritative pacing but also with a convincing access of vocal range. Her

account of the speech fully earns, and makes possible, the prolonged pause (nearly a full minute) at the stage direction "Holds her by the hand, silent". The power of this moment is promptly dissipated by Ian McKellen's contorted vocalization of the lines which follow it, and this is typical of a deep instability in a performance by a major actor which tries for great things, and which misses them.

McKellen's first appearance (double-breasted white suit, Bond Street trench-coat) makes the insolence of the character immediately clear, a generalized arrogance which the rest of the play only renders more insufferable. A good deal can be inferred from the way in which interpreters of *Coriolanus* deliver his favoured expression about the people: Olivier's "Hing 'em" was lethally kinetic; Ian Richardson's almost languidly dismissive; Alan Howard's derisively scornful. McKellen produces an actorish bark which hardly allows the actual words to be distinguished. The trouble with his contempt is that it is so unrelieved as to seem unintelligent. *Coriolanus*'s leadership in getting the cowardly soldiers to follow his heroic example in the battle for Corioli goes for nothing, so that Cominius's eulogy is insufficiently underwritten by what we have already seen. In the debate about how much authority to allow the people – a debate which both Menenius and Volumnia approach with some sense of political realities – *Coriolanus*'s contributions are delivered by McKellen with an indiscriminate over-projection which verges on the thuggish. His solicitations to the citizens for their voices convey no sense of inner humiliation and like a number of other passages are broadly milked for vulgar effect. To get a laugh after the first two lines of "You common cry of curs" – produced by the sheer effrontery of the character's arrogance – takes a kind of genius

Canvas opinions

Peter Kemp

The Ebony Tower
Granada TV

Shorting up what can seem a rather rickety fabrication, John Mortimer's adaptation of *The Ebony Tower* is impressive as a feat of conversion and repair work. The John Fowles novella on which it's based is a two-tier construction. Partly, it stands as a parody of the Celtic romances – the genre from which Fowles believes most Western literature derives. Journeying in knight-errant fashion into the green depths of a Breton forest, a young art-critic, David Williams, finds a beautiful girl caught under the spell of an ogre-like creature, the celebrated and notorious old painter, Henry Breasley. Williams proves unable to rescue her, though, since he himself is bedevilled by conformity. This ironic twist leads up to the work's other level – a flat fable about creativity, fitted out with Fowles's customary fictional fixtures. Here, polarized people are especially prominent. Fowles indulges in his usual play with contrasting female types – a cool-looking upper-class blonde with passionnote depths, and a working-class grotesque with maker-of-fact attitudes – while the two men embody antithetical ideals of art.

Williams – an *aficionado* of the abstract – represents a personality circumscribed by proportion and calculation, someone too measured to release himself to the unruliness of raw humanity. Breasley, at the other extreme, is that Romantic figure-head: the artist as a necessarily amoral creature, selfish, greedy, ruthless, willing to sacrifice anyone or anything to the demands of his work. A waver of Fowles's own banner, he proclaims that creativity and sexuality are intimately coupled. His muse is an alluring adolescent nicknamed "the Mouse" – a girl who, like other Fowles females, acts as a focus for a man's erotic, emotional and artistically creative energies. His work, defying modern trends, is a celebration of embracing the physical.

Communicating this creed, the novella labours under two handicaps. One is that, while the story deserves schematization, it relies

in the actor perhaps, but it is one which disastrously demeans the role in the interests of a crude intelligibility.

The fundamental reason for McKellen's failure in a part for which (remembering that he has given us the best Macbeth most of us are likely to see) he seems so well suited may well lie in the fact that he does not sufficiently distinguish between the coarseness of the character as he conceives it, and the coarseness of the admittedly powerful technique he uses to convey that conception. The cracks between the actor's natural intelligence and the character's overweening boorishness are papered over with flamboyant displays of physical and vocal energy which seem unfunneled and unfocused. The relentless forward drive leaves no room for the investigation of the complications of *Coriolanus*'s character. Menenius's description of him as "too noble for the world", *Coriolanus*'s own qualities of mind (as in his remarks about Custom as "the dust on antique time"), the intense domestic relations with mother, wife and child – such aspects remain virtually unexplored. What is the point of *Coriolanus*'s saying, when approached by the suppliant party, "Like a dull actor now I have forgot my part", if there is no natural man behind the part? And when natural feeling prevails over the part – when he gives in to his mother and condemns himself to death – there is no sense of tragic self-division because there has been no sense of internal complexity. Finally, therefore, when *Coriolanus* is cut down by his enemies, McKellen has to resort to an extraordinary miming of the eagle fluttening the volcanic doveote accompanied by vocal glissandi of Ainley-esque extravagance in order to make the moment toll. It is an effect that certainly shows a perverse kind of courage, but it is in every way suicidal.

upon it – in the shape of Fowles's quadrilateral of opposing and near-allegoric figures. There's also the drawback that, though spattered with reference to painters and painting, the story gives only the palest reflection of their world since Fowles's unpictorial prose lacks both depth and vividness.

Granada's film, directed by Robert Knights, rectifies this latter weakness by stacking Breasley's quarters with convincing-looking canvases furnished by John Farrington. The fable's didactic angularity is rounded by the performances, too, into something more human and complex. Laurence Olivier turns Breasley from a clichéd symbol of the artist as outrageous rebel into a lively rendering of an often rather pathetic old rip. Helped by Mortimer's script, which presents the character as more of a person than a portrait, he supplies a rumorous but ultimately melancholy portrait of a man from a recognizable milieu and period; someone who, from his clothes to his courtesies, seems outmoded, a living museum-piece whose very obscurities are antiquated.

Greta Scacchi also succeeds in making her role more than merely emblematic. At once dignified and exciting, she contrives to be charismatic without over-seeming in the least stilted or absurd. The requirements of Toyah Wilcox's part – looking outlandish and being down-to-earth – don't place too great a strain on her capabilities. And Roger Rees fills out a demandingly subdued role with shrewdness and nuance.

He is aided in this by the screenplay, which alters the balance of the work. In Fowles's novella, Williams comes off clumsily in his passages of rather wooden jousting with Breasley; paragraphs of resounding condemnation accompany him as he sinks defeatedly home. In the television version, there's a more engaging sense of equal struggle. And Olivier's performance – full of wistful eye-flickers, hardening into rage and panic – points up this way the clash between the two men is not just over aesthetics but also over a beauty, as much a mating tussle as an artistic quarrel. Always showing an eagerness to keep things in proportion, Mortimer's script not only transfers *The Ebony Tower* to the screen, it makes it look distinctly less foppish.

Resistant ruminations

John Hope Mason

JEAN JOURDHEUIL and BERNARD CHARTREUX
Metacholy Jacques
Bush Theatre

The life of Rousseau was rich in dramatic material. An adventurous youth, an interesting love-life, long obscurity and sudden fame; intellectual distinction, success at the opera and a best-selling novel; Parisian polemics and Genevan politics; his works burnt in public and flight from France, a terrible family secret revealed and flight from Switzerland; arguments and quarrels with Voltaire, Diderot and Hume, plus an appearance by the young Boswell. A play about him could be biographical, confessional-historical, with intellectual flourishes of all kinds. It could be a romantic melodrama, a heroic saga, or a historical epic à la Brecht.

Jean Jourdhoul and Bernard Chartreux have chosen none of these. The Rousseau they present is the least dramatic of all – the prelapsarian Rousseau of the *Révères*. At the age of fifty-three, driven from his refuge in the Jura, Rousseau spent six weeks on the island of Saint-Pierre in the middle of Lake Bièvre. There he found his Garden of Eden. Detached from corrupt and hostile world he wandered round the island in a state of enchantment. He admired the plants as if they had never been observed before; he drifted on the lake in a rowing-boat and felt in the monotonous rhythm of the water the pulse of time before history. The distinctions between past, present and future, between self-conscious man and inanimate nature, disappeared; now became eternity, I became all.

The evocation of this rapturous experience is the starting-point of *Melancholy Jacques*. Watching it we become aware of what the theatre cannot do. The hypnotic beauty of Rousseau's prose will not come to life on stage. It could be translated into music (a commission for Steve Reich or Philip Glass, perhaps) but not into theatrical performance. Something else is needed. Aware of this, the authors turn to other material. But what they choose is not theatrical, it is only about the theatre – Rousseau's attack on the neo-classical doctrine of the value of plays. This serves more to highlight the problem than to provide a solution and we move from inert meditation to a dull lecture.

As if to compensate for this text Jean Jourdhoul (who also directs) has cast as Rousseau the least appropriate actor imaginable. Not only is Simon Callow about twenty years too young for the part, he is also the opposite of what is required. His strength as an actor lies in his extrovert physical energy. He has a restless need to make an effort out of the slightest moment, and his natural tendency is always to embellish, to parody and to amuse. His performances have a kind of theatricality that is very rare on the modern stage; they often convey tremendous pleasure and at times have achieved real brilliance.

None of these qualities, however, is right for the ageing, dreamy, reflective Rousseau. Jean Jacques had, like the other melancholy Jacques, "a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects; and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels which, by often rumination, wraps me up in a most humorous sadness". This is something quite beyond Callow's range.

The production has moments of charm and the occasional "orchestral" of Christopher Logue's translation go well with the part-period, part-modern designs. But only a fragment of the rich Rousseauian material is used. Ideas fill by like items on a shopping list, disconnected and of no interest to a third party; references to past events occur, but so perfunctory as to be without meaning. So at the end we come away with little sense of the man's personality and even less of the extraordinary potency of his thought.

Patience have recently published *Selected Plays of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (455pp, £4.95, 0-571-13516-0).

Right for the right reasons

Samuel Brittan

PETER JAY
The Crisis for Western Political Economy and
after essays
310pp, Deutsch, £14.95.
0233-976418

One of the more absurd prejudices of the book-reviewing world is against the collection of essays. This is a prejudice which works against the interests of readers. For in fact the essay of "paper" length is often the most sensible way of making a contribution to a subject, expressing one's own personality or simply entertaining the reader. In the case of Peter Jay, this very first and far too long delayed collection of essays provides an opportunity of spending several evenings with a most versatile, and engaging, as well as sharp-minded personality.

But it is just this versatility which so many lesser writers find so hard to take – this plus the fact that Jay is extremely difficult to place in terms of the normal political left-right spectrum, whose inadequacies he exposes. The book is not only about political economy but contains sections on foreign affairs, journalism and television and a personal section ranging from a celebration of the 1960s to the lessons of the "Great Fastnet Disaster".

Jay has three times sailed his own boat across the Atlantic, as well as having been Ambassador to Washington, and, whatever may be thought about TV am, he launched in his spare time what is still by far the most successful television current affairs programme (*Weekend World*). Such activities add credibility to his more abstract speculations. One cannot help reflecting on the narrow-mindedness of the incoming Conservative Government (at the instigation of its so-called "wet" or liberal wing) in removing from Washington the person best able to explain the "new realism" of the Thatcher Government to the United States and who had in fact already been doing so under this very heading for the Callaghan government, under which (whether the Labour Party now likes it or not) the true change in economic direction took place. Characteristically, Jay was replaced by a conventional Ambassador, who could only react with a puzzled hostility to the policies of the Thatcher government which had appointed him.

The more personal essays provide more than entertainment and light relief. They also shed light on the author's basic attitudes. Take for instance Jay's conclusion from Fastnet: "The truth is, as with so many others of the hazards of contemporary life which the sedentary committee mind cannot tolerate, that the costs of reducing such risks to zero greatly exceed the benefits to the human spirit and personal fulfillment of cheerfully accepting them." The author of these words must clearly mean by "market socialism" something different from the grey despot for unattainable security so often associated with the second of those two words. Jay's motto, abundantly illustrated in these pages of muscular prose, is that "hard heads and warm hearts can inhabit the same frame".

Or take the essay in defence of the 1960s. It originally appeared in the *Illustrated London News* nearly a decade and a half ago; and I had never seen it before. Yet I was astonished and delighted to find his favourite *bêtes noires* were the same as mine. They include Clive Boll's *Civilisation*, that prize given to so many sixth-formers, which is not only "affore, avowedly elitist and rapidly decadent" but also essentially unutilized (I wish Jay had taken in Roger Fry's "altruistic form" for good measure). We take a common joy in Gibbon's description of "the triumph of barbarism and religion" and the devastating irony Gibbon displayed over the joys – and aesthetically repellent – habits of the early Christian monks.

There are other personal essays in the section on press and television. But the gossip-mongers will be wasting their time if they expect to find the lowdown on TV am, in the sense of who did what to whom when. The author has maintained his vow of silence on these matters. The relevant chapter is entitled "The Lessons of TV am" (my italics).

To a non-specialist the explanation of the "blue against understanding" in much current affairs television – namely its twin roots in the

provincial newsroom and the movie film business – seems as valid as ever. Jay's proposed "electronic publishing" would eliminate the whole paternalistic and bureaucratic business of channel licensing so that any would-be producer could transmit (subject to the ordinary laws of the land) any programme which can find a market to cover its costs. He shows how a market socialist can be far more market-oriented than a supposedly radical Thatcher government when he criticizes the latter for failing to insist that cable installations become capable of carrying a near-infinity of channels and introduce variable price charging, on the telephone model, at the point of consumption.

Jay believes that his most substantial essay is that entitled "What is the news?" This is the best type of "Oxford philosophy" analysis of how we formulate from the continuous flow of data bombarding us all the time, the news-worthy "facts". Jay's definition may sound obvious once he has enunciated it. But the interesting aspect, demonstrated on route, is that any list of either facts or news is (a) inevitably theory-laden and (b) inextricably involved with the values and interests of the person making it.

Still more interesting is the assertion that there is neither a right nor an obligation to report all news irrespective of consequences. Jay's argument for the privacy of leaders' private lives, which has already been so much geyed, is but an instance of his more far-reaching view that there can only be a presumption in favour of freedom of speech, which "cannot override the ethics and obligations of mankind". Jay's position can be usefully related to R. M. Hare's distinction between intuitive or first-level moral maxims (which may be in the public sphere cover anything from free speech to the duty to fight for one's country) and the second or critical level at which these first-level principles have themselves to be justified and exceptions determined on utilitarian grounds. The position is more difficult for those of us who believe that personal freedom is of independent value not entirely derivable from its utility, but which may have to be traded off against other values on an unavoidably subjective basis. (See the second chapter of my *The Role and Limits of Government Expenditure*, Temple Smith, 1983.)

The one section of the book which I found difficult to read, was that on foreign affairs. Here and here only one is conscious of Jay's well-known ability to hold together long and complex sentences full of parentheses, subordinate clauses and other qualifiers. This may be because the position taken is, unusually for Jay, a fairly standard one: a tough-minded care for the Nato Alliance plus a more imaginative approach to the Third World which refrains from bolstering client dictatorships simply because they are anti-Communist. But neither the lack of novelty of the views nor their association with a currently unfashionable President, Jimmy Carter, makes them wrong.

The foreign affairs section becomes alive when Jay lays into the "European ostrich" and defonds the "Americas eagle". A prejudice can be useful if it poses out bad odours which are indeed to be found in the European polity today. We can all enjoy reading: "If the ghosts of Frederick the Great, Queen Elizabeth, Napoleon and Hitler to politics, or of Colborn, Joe Chamberlain, Schacht and Mussolini in economics were ever to be freed in the world of the late 20th century, it could only be by forging a state of the size and with the resources of Western Europe as a whole." But is there not an uncomfortable grain of truth here? As we stroll down the Via Garibaldi or take coffee in the Piazza Cavour to be found in every Italian city, can we deny the European "genius for nationalism", demonstrated by Jay in some detail in relation to both military and economic policy? Or can one attend a European conference anywhere from Munich to Mantua without realizing the truth of Jay's maxim that "America decides – Europe complies"?

Before coming to the dilemma of Western political economy, spare a glance for "A Case for a Select Committee on Economic Affairs" in the drafting of which I played a small role. The committee now exists (entitled *The Treasury Committee*) and has had a beneficial effect on the level of information and debate in the

the way envisaged. But it still lacks the complement of an official Council of Economic Advisers which would have more visibility and independent existence than the departmental economic advisers (who would themselves sit on the proposed Council) and be able to place a greater variety of options in front of both the Government and public.

On such a Council Peter Jay would surely deserve an honoured (if, alas, unlikely) place for displaying the un-British virtue of having been proved right on the key issue of political economy. For he enunciated as early as 1973 the incompatibility of full employment, an inflation rate which does not accelerate, and "free" collective bargaining in a monopolized labour market. He and Wynno Godley of Cambridge were as far as I know the only ones to foresee unemployment in the "low millions" – a phrase much ridiculed at the time. Godley's original reasons for pessimism were much more parochial than Jay's, being based on the weaknesses of the British balance of payments and the high propensity to import. It was thus incapable of explaining the simultaneous deterioration of job prospects in many different countries, including strong currency countries, such as Germany, previously the home of the *Wirtschaftswunder*. Jay's prediction deserves the palm, being based on the generic features of modern mixed economies rather than on any peculiar national problems.

Indeed the identity of the two main apparent exceptions to the Jay thesis – the United States and Japan – actually illustrated it and were foreseen by Jay at the time. For in the United States one of the three incompatible elements – union-power – was never as strong as in Europe and has weakened sharply. The other exception, Japan, does not have a union system of the Western kind, but operates with individual company unions.

The one part of the Jay thesis that needs now to be modified is the "progressive destabilisation of democratic institutions" in the face of their inability to deliver reasonable employment and price performance together. Jay concedes that "British economic masochism and political courage" (under both Callaghan and Thatcher) have impaled us on the "very high unemployment" horn of the dilemma. Whether the public's unexpected toleration of this phenomenon is temporary and deceptive or whether there is some mysterious change in the nature of work which explains it, is too early to say.

If the incompatibility of full employment, a stable currency and union collective power seems obvious today, it was far from obvious when the Jay thesis first appeared. In the early and middle 1970s, double-digit inflation burst on the world, triggered off by the oil price explosion, but also following on the heels of a synchronized international boom itself related to the last major attempt by all major governments to spend their way into prosperity. In reaction to those events the Friedmanite counter-revolution first gained political attention as a way out of inflation superior to the incomes policies which had so often been tried and failed. Shorn of their technical detail, the underlying message of the Friedmanite writings was: "If you concentrate on achieving price stability gradually, you may have to accept a slightly less ambitious idea of full employment than the targets which you have about you cannot achieve, and you may have some awkward transitional recessions while the inflation rate comes down. But once the system has settled down at a stable rate of inflation – whether a zero rate or merely a low one – you will find economic performance pretty reasonable on jobs as well as prices."

It was because I hoped and partially believed in this more optimistic story that I remained agnostic about Jay's argument at the time. Indeed it was rightly labelled a "general hypothesis", for it was not demonstrable by facts and logic alone. It was perfectly possible that the rising unemployment of the post-1973 period was merely a transitional price to be paid for by stopping and reducing inflation. Indeed most British monetarists of a decade or so ago thought that 800,000 was a grossly excessive estimate of the so-called "natural" rate of unemployment (more accurately named the non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment, NAIRU) at which the system would settle on the level of information and debate in the

once inflation had stabilized. We now know that the "natural" rate is indeed in the "low millions".

As is well-known, Jay's preferred remedy is a market economy based on workers' co-operatives – that is, to do away with the tendency of wages to accelerate at full employment levels of demand by abolishing wages and leaving groups of workers to sell their labour for what it will fetch in the market place. Whether the remedy is valid, invalid or partially valid, Jay's proposal has the outstanding merit of tackling the unemployment problem where anyone uncorrupted by too much macro-economics would expect it to originate, namely in the labour market.

With hindsight it is clear that both the Keynesian policy revolution and the monetarist counter-revolution were dazzling digressions around the main problem. The defect they had in common was that they thought they could make a successful detour around the market which was malfunctioning – that for labour – by skillful adjustments of financial aggregates.

The colossal over-optimism of both attitudes can now be seen. When underlying conditions were making for low unemployment, then either moderate Keynesian or monetarist policies appeared to work. Now that they no not, the detour through macroeconomic policy can be seen to have lost its value. Employment policies will have to return to where the problem originates – the micro-economics of the labour market. "Pricing into work" requires not just exhortation, but institutional changes in the incentive structure going far beyond anything in current official thinking.

Jay has promised a full-scale work on his sort of market socialism. In the meantime the present book contains a paper for the Manchester Statistical Society – much less well-known than the original Wincott Lecture which launched the Jay hypothesis – which both gives more detail of his proposals and answers many of the common objections. Many critics do not realize that Jay is not advocating workers' co-operatives as a sole panacea, but as part of a "new political settlement" which will involve: far more marketization of government services and break-up of public corporations than Mrs Thatcher's most far-out advisers have ever contemplated; the extension of anti-monopoly legislation to any collusion by workers' co-operatives to fix prices (as far cry from traditional syndicalism which had little use for competitive markets), and a built-in commitment to increase monetary demand at a non-inflationary rate. Jay's co-operatives would be able to borrow not merely by issuing bonds but by variable interest loans rather like non-voting shares.

Jay is well aware of the economic literature which suggests that an economy of workers' co-operatives may in some respects perform less well than capitalism. His strongest argument throughout is that his critics are making a comparison with an idealized capitalism (whether *laissez-faire* or corrected), while the reality is that of capitalism distorted by monopolistic wage bargaining, and by political intervention to aid many warring interest groups.

Anyone who wants to investigate seriously the pros and cons of the co-operative economy should also read Chapter 9 of James Meade's *Stagnation Wage Fixing* (1982). All of Meade's instincts and emotions are in favour of co-operative market socialism, yet he cannot bring himself to recommend it as a general answer to stagflation. His most important objection is that co-operative enterprises would be disinclined to take on workers because of the high priority that existing co-operatives would give to increasing the average income of existing members. Meade and Jay agree that the crucial question is the rate at which new co-operatives would be formed to absorb the unemployed.

To the question "Why are not such co-operatives formed now?" Jay's answer is that existing union power would effectively crush any attempt by the unemployed to price themselves into work at non-union rates; but that in a non-capitalist co-operative economy unions would lose their *raison d'être* and thus wither away. My main difficulty at this and other points is that I am not sure how far the superior performance of the co-operative economy is supposed to arise as a pure matter of

economic mechanics - that is, self-interested responses to a new incentive structure - and how far Jay is relying on the changed attitudes and greater legitimacy which he hopes a co-operative order would bring to economic institutions. The latter considerations are just as important as the former - despite the desire of some shopstewards of the academic economics industry to rule them out as "sociology" and therefore worthless; and I hope they will be developed in Jay's fuller work.

Of course those who accept Jay's diagnosis of the malaise of European capitalism may differ amongst themselves about the appropriate remedy, if remedy there be. The four main systemic changes now on offer are the following:

1. Workers' co-operatives in a competitive market;
2. A large extension of profit sharing to the point where a major part of the worker's pay packet comes as a fraction of corporate revenues rather than a fixed wage;

Looking into the abyss

J. E. S. Hayward

WILLIAM KEEGAN
Mrs Thatcher's Economic Experiment
240pp. Penguin. Paperback, £2.95.
0140077499

JOCK BRUCE-GARDYNE
Mrs Thatcher's First Administration: The prophets confounded
199pp. Macmillan. £20 (paperback, £7.95).
0333367612

KEITH SMITH
The British Economic Crisis: Its past and future
256pp. Penguin. Paperback, £3.50.
0140225021

Economic journalism is not what it used to be, even if with the assistance of prime ministerial patronage it can lead Peter Jay to the Washington Embassy and Nigel Lawson to No 11 Downing Street. Yet the influence of such otherwise ephemeral excursions through the currently fashionable economic fallacies should not be underestimated. Not merely are the weekly economic commentaries easily accessible to those in positions of power; they are relentlessly reiterated in pre-digested, fatally facile phrases that more than compensate in plausibility for their lack of intellectual penetration or practical efficacy. The analysis of contemporary economic policy has been largely abandoned to the financial journalists by British economists, who have regarded this sort of "applied" economics as carrying low professional status, while political scientists have been more absorbed in the processes by which policies are made and implemented than in the evaluation of the policies themselves.

In the 1960s, we had some fine economic journalists like Andrew Shonfield, Michael Shanks and Samuel Brittan, who parlayed the gap and did so with distinction. By comparison, with the products of such heavyweights, two of the three books reviewed here are rather lightweight, sometimes giving the impression of yielding to the pressure to put anecdotes and entertainment before either information or critical analysis. While humour may be a powerful ally of serious intellectual argument, it is no substitute for it.

The problem begins with the misleading choice of a title. Not until the epilogue does William Keegan admit "I have called this book *Mrs Thatcher's Economic Experiment*, but in an important sense it was not an experiment at all." You do not test dummies - or what Keegan calls "economic evangelism". The monetarist means became the supreme end in itself; monetarist economic policy triumphed over its purpose. The refusal to countenance alternatives - TINA - became the instrument of an intellectual terrorism in the service of the wilful transgression of the prime minister. The thesis of Keegan's book is stated in the very next paragraph, where he persists with his misnomer: "The Thatcher experiment was foisted on an only half-suspecting public by a group of ideologues who did not fully understand what they were doing, at a time when the critics who did understand what they were doing were politically weak and felt intellectually baited." Pride of place is given to his follow-

3. Removal of the legal huses of union monopoly power;
4. (3) Plus measures to give all citizens - and not just the existing shareholder class (as under privatization) - a stake in the earnings of capital.

A thorough analysis of these suggestions - and there could be others - is obviously not possible here. In pure economic logic the second suggestion of revenue sharing, developed by Martin Weitzman in *The Share Economy* (1984), may well be more employment promoting than co-operatives. But it depends very heavily on preservation of existing management rights - above all that of hiring and firing - and has an even greater risk than Jay's scheme of not conforming in practice to the intended model.

A problem with the third suggestion, direct attack on union monopoly, is that there is little agreement on what the legal roots of union monopoly are. Is it the closed shop, legal immunities, non-enforceable contracts or the ex-

economic commentators, the "disillusioned Keynesians" Samuel Brittan and Peter Jay, who softened up the Bank of England and the Treasury, while Sir Keith Joseph persuaded Mrs Thatcher and part of the Conservative Party that full employment must be sacrificed in the monetarist fight against inflation. Even though it was claimed that monetarist policies would reverse the rise in unemployment as a consequence of curbing inflation, what was not grasped was that both increasing unemployment and inflation were a by-product of Britain's industrial decline, temporarily submerged from view by North Sea oil.

One of the best things in Keegan's book is the way he shows how Sir Keith Joseph and Mrs Thatcher reversed the work of R. A. Butler and Harold Macmillan, who had succeeded in freeing Conservatism from the 1930s stigma of being the party of fatalistic quietism towards mass unemployment. To illustrate the deliberate repudiation of the legacy of her predecessors, it is worth retelling a story I have on good authority. Visiting Paris for the first time as Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher flabbergasted a senior French minister (Alain Peyrefitte) by announcing that she was the first post-war Conservative Prime Minister. Peyrefitte seemed to recall obscure names like Churchill, Eden, Macmillan, Home and Heath, but was sharply told that they allowed socialism to be extended in Britain whereas she was going to reverse it.

The populism of simplistic shared prejudices, together with the failures of her Labour and Conservative predecessors, supplemented by world recession, have helped Mrs Thatcher to carry through a revolution of falling expectations. Her image-makers were powerfully assisted by the Falklands War, even though resolute was forced upon her by backbench pressure. She subsequently played up to the English belief that guts are more important than brains and may even be an advantageous substitute for them. Her unrelenting hostility to the European Monetary System, which Jock Bruce-Gardyne confirms is inspired by xenophobia, is simply another example of her putting will over reason as the guide to political conduct. She glories in the role of warrior leader of one part of the British people against the rest, of the flourishing service sector and consumer South over the declining industrial and producer North, stirring up divisive conflict and then spuriously posing as the embodiment of national unity. The long-

emption from anti-monopoly laws? Macroeconomists rarely know much of industrial relations law and practice. On the other hand those who frame industrial relations law fall for the myth of responsible trade unionism and would do well to learn by heart the following paragraph from Jay's book:

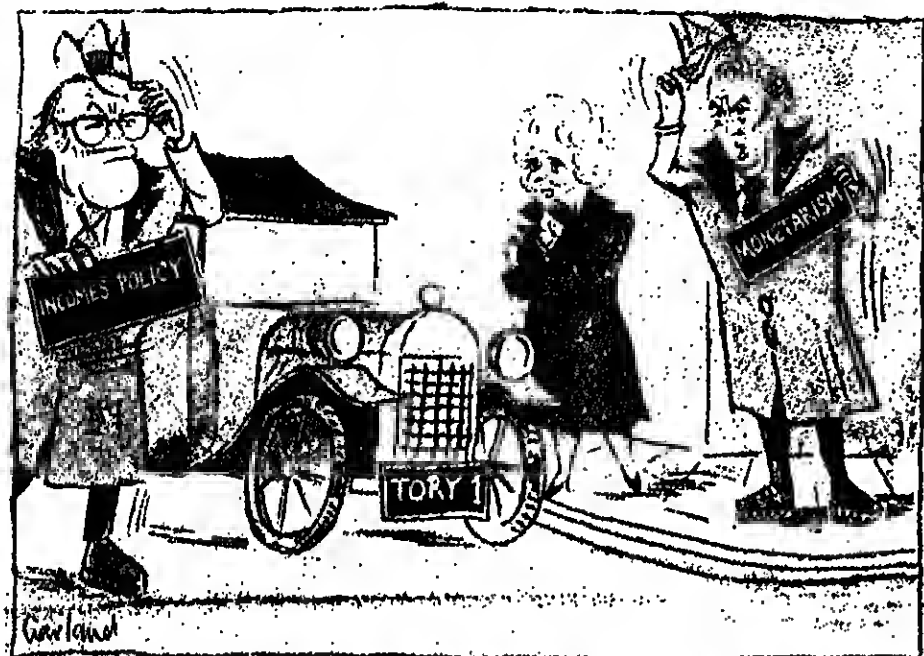
The problem would not be essentially different in character from what it is if every single participant in the economy had a Ph.D. in economics, was a devout supporter of the traditional principles of the Republican Party and was as fully concerned for the welfare of his neighbour as is commonly thought to be desirable.

Mass ownership of income-generating capital may help to make an attack on union power acceptable. But it is more than a sweetener. A capital stake would provide a major offset and cushion for those who would lose out from market-clearing wages. A society in which the old gentlemanly ideal of a modest competence was available to all citizens would be much better equipped to cope with the new technolo-

gy and sharp changes in the market value of work. (So perhaps Clive Bell may yet come into his own.)

All four of the reforms suggested involve a move away from wages as determined by collective bargaining - whether to market clearing wages or to altogether different systems of payment. Three out of the four involve fundamental changes in property relations either at the workplace or in general.

Whatever enthusiasts may hope, the best chance of making progress on any of these proposals is incrementally, not systemically, and incrementally the four approaches are mutually compatible. We can have more co-operatives, more profit sharing, a weakening of union power and more widespread capital ownership all at the same time. We therefore have a rough idea of the road on which to travel; and for this we have to thank those such as Peter Jay who have asked fundamental questions.



Nicholas Garland's drawing "Past! Fancy some new number plates?", first published in the *Daily Telegraph*, May 26, 1975, is reproduced from *Twenty Years of Cartoons* by Garland (Edinburgh: Salamander Press, 128pp. £4.95, 0 9075401 9).

term institutional values of local autonomy, judicial detachment and police impartiality are all immolated to the short-sighted cause of medium-term party advantage.

Today, mass unemployment is coedemolning millions to a useless, soul-destroying limbo to the name of monetarist dogmas, whose ghost Keynes thought he had laid forty years ago. Mrs Thatcher's selective quotations at the 1984 Brighton Conference from the 1944 Employment White Paper carefully avoided its centrepiece - the commitment to full employment - and have provoked deserved derision. The intolerable strain on "loyalty" to which conscientious civil servants are currently being subjected by the stringent requirements of official secrecy faces them with A. O. Hirschman's stark alternatives of "voice" or "exit". The flow of leaks betokens a surreptitious recourse to "voice", while those who are caught face an "exit" which the authorities intend to be ignominious but which others regard as honourable martyrdom in the public interest.

Lord Bruce-Gardyne (who has returned to journalism after being a junior Treasury minister from 1981 to 1983) makes clear that Nigel Lawson's brain-child, the medium-term financial strategy on which the spending ministers

are annually racked, was motivated mainly by the need to replace policy objectives - high output and employment - which could not be directly controlled by government, with the money supply, which he believed was the subordination of ends to means in the prosaic, cynical explanation usually concealed by the evangelical rhetoric of the monetarists. It is precisely this matter of political and administrative practicability that leads to my major reservation about Keith Smith's excellent book on *The British Economic Crisis*. It provides a lucid and comprehensive academic analysis of the need for reindustrialization, based upon a searching description of Britain's endemic problems and a destructive examination of the monetarist remedies propounded. His remedy is the Japanese model of MITI, but who in the British context can be trusted to "pick winners"? Institutional transfer is much more difficult than technology transfer. In any case, the institutional problems are dismissed by the penultimate paragraph and provide a cursory anti-climax to the scrupulous analysis that precedes it.

In 1930 the anglophile French political scientist André Siegfried wrote in *England's Crisis*: "What realists! How calmly they look straight into the abyss! For over forty years the Blue Books have been perpetually repeating the same grave warnings... but why is all this heart-searching so sterile? Simply this: intellectually the Englishman reads and appreciates these warnings but by instinct he refuses to believe them." The shrinking oil reserves and the growing overseas investments will post-poor but not avoid the dire consequences of deindustrialization. The shades of night are falling but 'ooe listens in vain for the Owl of Minerva. Would we even hear it through the cacophony as the circling vultures and the emboldened jackals close in to dismember the defenceless, dying and decomposing? Should we simply resign ourselves to Great Britain becoming Greater Gaudinami?

Bucking the trends

Kenneth Minogue

PETER SIMPLE
The Best of Peter Simple 1980-1984:
From the columns of the 'Daily Telegraph'
Telegraph Publications. £4.95.
08367044X

MICHAEL WHARTON
The Missing Will
216pp. Chatto and Windus. £10.95.
0701128663

Spare a thought for the poor satirist, such as Peter Simple, who has been at it now in the *Daily Telegraph* for the past quarter of a century. Reality is forever panting at his heels. "I see the Cathedral as an ecumenical laboratory", he quotes from a contemporary churchman, and then adds irritably: "I think he might have had the decency to acknowledge that he was quoting a phrase first used years ago by Dr. Spacely-Trellis, the go-ahead, hyper-ecumenical Bishop of Bevidon."

Dr Spacely-Trellis, of course, belongs in the cast of the long running "Way of the World" column, along with bawling Major Tannyon of the Friends of Noise, Clare Howitzer the feminist agony "auntie" and many others. Here is the world reflected in the mirror of comedy. The satirist exaggerates in the cause of laughter. But how can one exaggerate the Bishop of Durham?

Peter Simple has stumbled upon a terrifying truth: the future first surfaces in the form of absurdity, and then slowly takes on body and substance until we begin to mistake it for the normal. In the beginning was the boot. Absurdity is the law of modern development. Mock it, and you'll soon find you've got it.

In this light, the satirist emerges as the man with the crystal ball, a figure much more helpful in predicting the future than gypsies or social scientists. Most people have failed to understand that Simple is a Nostrodamus figure because they have made a simple category mistake. They think of his column as night-wing commentary. But Simple is no conservative. He is a reactionary, which is quite different.

A reactionary is someone with a clear and comprehensive vision of an ideal world we have lost. Unlike conservatives, who are drag-

ged along by the tide because yesterday's innovation has become to-day's tradition, the reactionary can recognize every change as one more step in our decline into noisy vulgarity. Peter Simple's target is modernity *tout court*: he detects jumbo lorries no less than mindless demonstrators, hypermarkets no less than the race relations industry, environmental signposting that takes the mystery out of nature no less than the social protestology of the Polytechnics. In fact, if the communists were not so busy, and so totalitarian, he could plausibly be described as left-wing, since he shares with them a detestation of progress in all its forms. In the spirit of Pascal, he calls a plague on all houses.

It is impossible to avoid the word "gentle" in describing the comic world of Peter Simple. It is reminiscent of the old Ealing comedies, with touches of the Goons in the marvels of nomenclature and the verbal flair. There's also no mistaking the fact that the gentleess comes from defeat. This is the satire of someone who knows that the busy little ants of progress are taking over, and that the only thing to do is to live inoffensively on the resources of the imagination.

In *The Missing Will*, the creator of Stretchford steps forward in his own persona as Michael Wharton. His account of his life up to the point when he began to turn into Peter Simple is a curious and almost esoteric document. On the surface, it is the story of a man who drifted through life until, in his middle forties, he found perhaps the only niche in the entire history of Western civilization that would have suited his special talents. He met Colin Welch, the "Way of the World" column, and his destiny, all in one.

Looked at more closely, Wharton's life is a meditation on the theme of alienation. The great thing about a pluralistic modern society is that there's a lot more to be alienated from than in traditional worlds; but on the other hand, the alienated draw courage from one another. And modernity encourages the comic because we may virtually define the modern world as what happens when people discover that alienation (of a sort) can be fun. One doesn't have to submerge oneself in some ghastly community. And the fun can come from the most unlikely places. Wharton's mother was, from some points of view, a small-

minded xenophobe; his father muddled the language of the Wharton nursery with Germanic coinages. As Wharton remarks: "In effect they had both lost their levels and we, their children, never had any." In calling this section "the deformatory years", Wharton expresses his awareness of the irony of an alienation on which his creative energies depend. He felt it as a child, and no less at Oxford. He feels it in the presence of the rich and famous. Although gregarious, he resembles some shy animal always likely to make a bolt back to the warm security of its hole.

Thomas Hobbes defined laughter as a sense of "sudden glory". It is seeing someone slip on a banana skin. But the commonest sort of laughter, as the tabloids daily remind us, is that of the poor man watching the rich man slip on a banana skin. Humour is the response of the defeated, but the defeated have their reasons which the victorious never know. Put Peter Simple in the context of the decades in which he has been writing "The Way of the World" and it becomes clear that he has been mocking the trends of the time. The world, has been

engulfed by an almost unstoppable tide of boring, pretentious, jargon-ridden, loud-voiced, bureaucratizing ecumenists, and Peter Simple has picked them off in detail and in general. His targets are people so feverish with trendiness that they cannot enjoy the simple pleasures of lust, rambling and drinking in pubs. They rule the world by staying on at meetings till the human beings have left, and then put things to the vote.

Yet nothing is forever, and Peter Simple has helped to influence the revival of lightheartedness in the new right. Whereas conservatives have often come to terms with the modern world the reactionaries have been sending up alarm signals of such compelling wit and logic that they may claim some credit for the fact that some of the dimmer and nastier aspects of the progressive spirit are currently on the defensive. The reactionary world is a utopia and a state of mind. It could never become a programme. But it has proved to be invaluable in mitigating the crudities of the programmes and projects we do have to endure.

With and against the grain

Neil Berry

JOSEPHINE ROSS (Editor)
The Vogue Bedside Book
256pp. Hutchinson. £9.95.
0091585301

W. L. WEBB (Editor)
The Bedside 'Guardian' 33: A selection from the 'Guardian', 1983-84
240pp. Collins. £8.95.
0002173654

BERNARD LEVIN
The Way We Live Now
267pp. Cape. £8.95.
0224023725

ALAN COREN (Editor)
Pick of Punch
190pp. Hutchinson. £8.50.
0091587905

Successful journals acquire their own aura, and for all the apparent diversity of the pieces gathered in the first *Vogue Bedside Book*, many seem distinctly *Vogue-ish*. In a rather too brief introduction, editor Josephine Ross remarks that she had an embarrassing wealth of material to choose from: Bertrand Russell, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, W. H. Auden, Aldous Huxley and Kenneth Tynan are some of the names whose *Vogue* contributions were there for the reprinting; and it is odd that nobody before now has thought to quarry the two hundred or so bound volumes which have piled up since the magazine began publication in 1916.

Huxley was a staff writer on the magazine in the 1920s, and the clever, flippant, hedonistic essays he wrote for it then (there is one here entitled "The Dangers of Work") epitomized, if they did not help to establish, a byzantine ethos. Thirty years later, the young Kenneth Tynan, killing "as dead as it must be killed" the "skulking notion" that his was an Oxford generation of austere, flamboyancy-rejecting swots, was in the same vein, and so too was Kingsley Amis - surprising as it may now seem - when, in a 1958 contribution, he suavely poured scorn on neo-puritans and censorship.

Of course *Vogue* has gone in for other genres besides the insouciant essay. This bedside book contains examples of insouciant short fiction (William Sansom, J. G. Ballard), insouciant travel-writing (John Mortimer, Stephen Spender) and insouciant humour (Peter Sellers, John Wells). The harvest is a fairly rich one, and if there has been a falling-off recently in the high society department - Tino Brown stalking pop celebrities appears wholly vulgar next to Nancy Mitford musing on the debutante phenomenon - there is plenty left to divert the late-night browser.

Josephine Ross reports that the *Vogue* archives might easily yield many more anthologies, but she would have to start culling them out to catch up with the *Guardian*, which this year publishes its thirty-third bedside book. Peter Usdinov supplies a genial introduction to this selection of articles and comment drawn from the paper's columns over the past year.

Usdinov remarks that the *Guardian* presumes a "degree of intelligence" in its readers, and it says something about the state of much of the rest of the British press that this observation does not sound altogether ludicrous. There is no gold in the present book - the *Guardian* is too careless about good prose to produce that - but there is no dross either. Included is a reasonable quota of daily journalism that well deserved to be saved from yellowing oblivion: Stanley Reynolds's lament for Liverpool (which caused local outrage at the time), Frank Keating's lyrical tribute to John Arlott on his seventieth birthday and two of James Cameron's stirring *cries de coeur* are particularly worth re-reading. Yet nothing inside the book is so eloquent as the picture on its cover which shows a smouldering eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation between policeman and picketing miner: this award-winning photograph by Don McPhee seems likely to survive as a characteristic image of Britain's turbulent year.

It is hard to imagine Bernard Levin writing for the *Guardian*, though he has said that he prefers to write "against the grain". *The Way We Live Now* collects articles from *The Times* and book reviews from the *Observer*, all of which were written during the past eighteen months. Fastidious readers might well start murmuring about book-making, but this volume reads like a lively diary, a diary written by an acute, lucid and often funny man with an obsessive interest in public affairs. Levin can be read here pontificating on the downfall of Cecil Parkinson and on the egging of Michael Heseltine. Persecution has no fiercer journalistic enemy, nor freedom of speech a more articulate champion, and while some of the book-reviews in *The Way We Live Now* are nugatory, the defence of the theatre critic's right to damn - called forth by Arnold Wesker's attack on the Mr Snecers of this world - is something of a classic.

In passing, Levin refers to what he takes to be the invariable dreadfulness of *Punch*, a dreadfulness which, echoing Malcolm Muggeridge's essay on the subject, he ascribes to the magazine's "weekly obligation to provoke mirth". The *Intest Pick of Punch* hardly amounts to a powerful refutation of this dictum. In a piece that fairly advertises its desperation, the normally estimable Russell Davies writes at groan-inducing length about Barry Manilow's nose. There are better things, admittedly. Alan Brien contributes a slyly amusing profile of the Marquess of Bath, an "almost comically emblematic super-patriot with eyes of red, white and blue". The old boy abashed off his Hitler mementoes to the burly reporter, commenting (apparently in the words of the Duke of Windsor): "You can't deny it: the man must have had something." One imagines Brien's delighted incredulity as they looked over Nazi uniforms, weapons and some of the Führer's early pointings. This is the kind of entrancingly satirical article the demise of which Muggeridge bemoaned when he took over the editing of the magazine in the early 1950s. Alas, it cannot be said to typify *Punch* today.

Reps

Reps and execs in Plastics and Packaging
(holiday-wise it's Costa del Parvum)
Filmenis and Foris, complete Expenses
Forms for their Beer 'n' Byte basket scampl.

They are disgusting; I am a secular
saint of the breed Empiricist Atheist
(here is a quid for Oxford hapless
starving in sewer-pipes somewhere beastly).

PETER READING

John Co. 116

Mixed doubles

Toby Fitton

CEES NOOTEBOOM
Rituals
145pp. Viking. £8.95.
0 670 80086 4
A Song of Truth and Semblance
83pp. Louisiana State University Press.
\$11.95.
0 8071 1176 7

These two short but tightly packed novels, both agreeably translated by Adrienne Dixon, introduce to English readers the work of the fifty-one-year-old Dutch writer Cees Nooteboom, which has been greeted with acclaim in Holland, where *Rituals* has received various literary awards. They share not only exquisite length and portentous epigraphs, but a balance of skilled characterization and experimentalism of approach.

Rituals is mainly the story of Inigo (or Inni) Wintrop, a plump sensualist, amateur art dealer, dabbler in horoscopes, pictures, women and at one time in rather lackadaisical suicide as well. Deserted by his wife after such zest as their marriage possessed had vanished beyond the recall of mutual fantasizing, he reverts to indolent whoredom. A flash-back to ten years before shows him as a young clerk taken up by a previously estranged aunt, in whose house he encounters extremes both of indulgence and austerity. A jolly, gourmandizing Monsignor met at dinner, and the brisk attentions of a buxom fellatrix after it, are contrasted with an austere isolated intellectual friend of the aunt's, deeply into mental self-laceration and existential speculation. This character is strictly defined, but his teachings are only temporarily effective, a passing phase in Wintrop's generally sensual development.

Twenty years on, we see him after a bout of casual sex with a student pick-up and a successful find in the art market which leads him to an oriental dealer, another of whose customers turns out to be the disowned son of his former guru. This weird figure has inherited his father's self-hatred, which shows itself in athletic and mental austerities but in an addic-

tion to Japanese meditation and particularly the tea ceremony (which provides the Ritual of the title). The dénouement, following a final quasi-sacramental tea ceremony, is well managed, with a proper sense of growing tension, and the younger guru's deliverance from his detested self is none the less striking for having been seen coming long before. Inni Wintrop can indolently admit developments. "He had a first-class seat in the auditorium, and the play was by turns horrible, lyrical, comic, tender, cruel and obscene." It all seems to have little effect on him.

Inni has a walk-on part in *A Song of Truth and Semblance*. This also explores polarities, this time through the interplay of two fictions—the world of an author and that of his imaginative creations. We are shown the loneliness of the short-distance writer, whose research has immersed him in Bulgarian history to produce Colonel Lyuben Georgiev, a fearsome-looking military man of high reputation but privately shameful soft-centred nervousness. His friend and part-confidant, Dr Fict, marries a fey, young, consumptive, sexy wife. The Colonel is smitten, the Doctor connives at an adultery during a shared holiday in Rome as a diversion from his own philanderings. Will a consummation he achieved?

The author, puzzling intermittently about these developments, has a friend "the other writer", a busy, productive, successful literary man, intolerant of the lofty theorizings of his colleague, whom he cautions against too much introspection. The "other writer" is much occupied in the admittedly limited world of Dutch letters, with its frequent conferences and grand funerals, which are not to the taste of the Bulgarian specialist.

Both the themes which make up *A Song of Truth and Semblance* are very slight. Their fugal interaction is ingenious but somehow unsubtle, and the high theme of the relationship of the fictional creation to its inventor weighs too heavily on the development of either plot.

The parallels between the two novels—both of them worked out like mixed doubles tournaments—show the formulaic quality which these experiments have achieved. The mould is probably not a satisfactory one for use a third time.

Paperback fiction in brief

Patricia Craig

WILLIAM CATHER, *Shadows on the Rock*. 278pp. Virago. £3.95. 0 86068 311 7. □ "The rock" is Quebec, the time the late seventeenth century, and the central characters are a French father and daughter—the town's apothecary and his twelve-year-old helpmeet. Virtually nothing happens in this novel (first published in 1931), but it distils a remarkably pungent atmosphere—the grey, steep town, the market-place, the Ursuline convent, the freezing Canadian winter. The book is about the power and tenacity of civilizing traditions, and, as A. S. Byatt says in her introduction, its "artistic centre somehow is the displacement of the reader's attention from people to things".

WILLIAM TREVOR, *Fools of Fortune*. 192pp. Penguin. £2.50. 0 14 00 6876 7. □ *Fools of Fortune* (first published in 1983) shows William Trevor in unusually elegiac mood; tragic Ireland, not the humorous decorum of various English localities, is his theme. The novel opens in 1981, at a house in Co Cork named Kilneagh, soon to become the setting for a Black-and-Tan atrocity, the effects of which will reverberate into the far distant future. Exceptionally delicate and arresting in tone.

ANTHONY POWELL, *O, How the Wheel Becomes It*. 137pp. Penguin. £2.50. 0 14 006927 5. □ In his latest novel (1983) Anthony Powell reverts to the manner of his early work: it's closer in spirit to *Waking* than *Widmerpool*. It concerns the late-life activities of a literary critic named Geoffrey Shadbold, to whom a lot of bemusing incidents suddenly occur, causing confusion and embarrassment to overtake him. Sharp, frivolous and highly diverting.

EUORA WELTY, *The Optimist's Daughter*. 180pp. Virago. £3.50. 0 86068 375 3. □ Originally written as story for the *New Yorker*, and later expanded, *The Optimist's Daughter* (first published in 1972) opens with the arrival in New Orleans of Laurel McKelva, middle-aged war widow and successful artist, whose father is about to undergo a minor operation. The principal characters in this highly compressed work, apart from Laurel, are Judge McKelva, his dead wife Becky and common young second wife, Wanda Fay; and we have, as usual, a chorus of homely, eccentric and knowing voices—as friends and neighbours gather for a funeral—to comment outspokenly on the events of the past.

SHIVA NAIPPAUL, *A Hot Country*. 185pp. Abacus. £2.95. 0 349 12492 2. □ Shiva Naipaul's hot country is the South American state of Guyana, and the theme of the novel (first published in 1983) is the malaise afflicting its inhabitants, a malaise embodied in the principal characters. Aubrey St Pierre, a liberal-minded descendant of slave-owners, is futilely engaged in running a bookshop, while his intelligent wife Dina, of mixed ancestry, succumbs more and more to a torpor engendered by disaffection. A thoughtful and lucid work.

DOROTHY L. SAYERS (Editor), *Great Tales of Detection*. 382pp. Deat. £2.50. 0 460 11928 1. □ First published in 1936 as *Tales of Detection*, this anthology includes stories by early exponents of the genre such as Poe and Wilde; Collins, and comes right up to date with Sayers (elaborate), Christie (suspense-riden) and Freeman Wills Crofts (ingenious). "A cynical twist in the modern manner" (Sayers's phrase) is supplied with a number of endings; however, the predominant feeling you get from this collection—not altogether disagreeably—is one of Edwardian fustiness.

MOLLY KRANE, *Time After Time*. 247pp. Abacus. £2.95. 0 349 12076 5. □ *Time After Time* (1983) concerns a freakish quartet; the Swifts, a brother and three sisters, all of them maimed in one way or another, and living combatively together under an unsound Irish roof. The arrival of blind Austrian Tish, a cousin out of the past, causes some disquiet for the unseeing little family. Molly Krane, as ever, shows an acute feeling for the humour of the grotesque.

CHRISTINA STEAO, *The Puzzleheaded Girl*. 285pp. Virago. £3.50. 0 86068 178 5. □ *The Puzzleheaded Girl* (1968) consists of four novellas, two dealing with feckless, indecisive American girls in Paris, one "a sort of ghost story", and one—the title story—recounting the behaviour, over a number of years, of an awkward, incorruptible waif who lacks the instinct to conduct herself suitably in ordinary social situations. Material for comedy? Not the way Christina Stead treats it: what she offers instead is an oblique approach, abundance of characters, incidents, comments, words, everything—and an absolute fidelity to the flux of everyday experience.

SUSAN HILL, *The Woman in Black*. 139pp. Penguin. £1.75. 0 14 00 7133 4. □ In this traditional ghost story (first published in 1983), Susan Hill succeeds in procuring for her readers an authentic frisson. She takes the most potent ingredients of the genre—the sceptical narrator, the deserted mansion, the slow rise in tension, the inexplicable occurrences, the noise of a past tragedy being enacted in the mist—and handles them sedately and discreetly. Unlike a good many tales of the supernatural, this one genuinely intrigues and disturbs.

LISA ST AUBIN DE TÈRAN, *The Slow Train to Mihn*. 254pp. Penguin. £2.95. 0 14 00 6934 2. □ The strikingly impassive narrator/heroine of Lisa St Aubin de Tèran's second novel (first published in 1983) finds herself married at sixteen to a Venezuelan terrorist; a strange two-year period follows, with listless Lisaveta drifting across Europe in the company of her husband and his rascally friends. There's an odd quality of detachment in the way the narrator recreates her singular experiences; and this makes for an effective prose style, though it also limits the possibilities for thoughtfulness, or even self-awareness.

LOUISE SHIVERS, *Here to Get my Baby out of Jail*. 141pp. Flamingo. £1.95. 0 00 65407 2 4. □ In Louise Shivers's deft short novel (1983) a young North Carolina housewife and mother, Roxy Walston, recounts the events preceding a death by violence on her husband's tobacco farm. A stranger establishes himself on the premises; and then things begin to get dangerously out of hand. The voice of the narrator is resonant, plain and unironic, the story has the economy of an anonymous folk-tale or ballad, and the author is adept at evoking the state of physical entrapment: "nothing real but us brushing ourselves together like two flint rocks rubbing to make fire". This novel shows above all an extraordinary sureness of touch.

ARTURO BAREA, *The Forge*. 284pp. £2.95. 0 00 65409 0. *The Track*. 237pp. £2.95. 0 00 65409 1. *The Clash*. 396pp. £3.50. 0 00 65409 2. Flamingo. □ The overall title of Arturo Barea's trilogy is "The Forging of a Rebel", and the books—autobiographical novels first published in English translation in 1941, 1943 and 1946—set out to document the experiences of one member of the "Spanish Generation" which was the core of the Civil War. The opening volume is set in a poor part of Madrid, and abounds in vivid details and perceptions; in part two, which takes us up to 1925, the narrator is a sergeant with the Spanish Army in Morocco; *The Clash* deals with the Civil War itself. After the defeat of the Republican forces, Barea became an exile from Spain; he died in England, where he had lived for nearly twenty years, in 1957. In 1946, the TLS reviewer of *The Clash* praised the novel for its "passionate sincerity", and George Orwell put Barea among the most valuable of Britain's "literary acquisitions".

H. E. BATES, *My Uncle Silas*. 190pp. Oxford Paperbacks. £2.95. 0 19 281854 6. □ *My Uncle Silas*, first published in 1939, is a collection of related tales about the narrator's rumbustious nonagenarian relative, who often resorts to hypochondria in recounting the exploits of his youth. If we find Uncle Silas's wickedness somewhat cosy, and the quiet atmosphere rather too fully flavoured, we should nevertheless—as V. S. Pritchett reminds us in his valuable introduction—guard against underestimating the artfulness of these stories.

Berlin in person

Patrick O'Connor

THIERRY DE NAVACELLE
Sublime Marlene
158pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £8.95.
0 283 99042 2
ALEXANDER WALKER
Dietrich
207pp. Thames and Hudson. £12.95.
0 500 01340 3
MARLENE DIETRICH
Marlene Dietrich's ABC
182pp. Lorrimer. £4.95.
0 8044 61177
Marlene D.
246pp. Paris: Grasset.
24228891 6
Marlene
London Film Festival

In *Sublime Marlene*, Thierry de Navacelle suggests that Marlene Dietrich's attraction is based upon a contrast between toughness and vulnerability, "both a woman who loves luxury and an efficient housewife". Dietrich was, of course, a very beautiful woman. The bone structure of her face lent itself to the sort of lighting and photography that the cinema of the 1930s and 40s delighted in, and her unerring ability to pose successfully for the camera was evident even before her discovery by Josef von Sternberg. It was this, and Dietrich's sense of humour and timing, that kept the formula potent long after her contemporaries had resorted to character roles or *grand guignol* to continue their careers.

Both Alexander Walker's and Thierry de Navacelle's books draw their copious illustrations from the Kobal Collection. John Kobal, the magpie of cinema memorabilia, wrote a book about Dietrich himself (published in 1968) and both of these much longer volumes are in a sense descendants of his own work. Dietrich's image had a number of ambiguities from the very beginning of her career, but this remains a subject she regards with disdain. In her own book she quotes Kenneth Tynan's essay about her but omits the following passage:

She has sex but no particular gender. They say (or at least I say) that she was the only woman allowed to attend the annual ball for male transvestites in pre-Hitler Berlin. . . . this Marlene lives in a sexual no man's land—and no woman's either. She dedicates herself to looking rather than to being sexy. . . . she is every man's mistress and mother, every woman's lover and aunt, and nobody's husband except Rudolf's—and he is her husband, far off on his ranch in California.

The first song she ever recorded, in 1928, was "Wenn die beste Freundin" from Mischka Spillansky's revue *Es liegt in der Luft*. In this duet she and the French actress Margo Lion were dressed identically and sang about all the things they did together, each professing "undying love for the other, while hinting that each found the other an encumbrance in pursuit of the same boyfriend". They wore buxoms of violets, a symbol, since Bourdet's play *La Prisonnière* (according to Dietrich), of "un sens très particulier androgyné". Dietrich denies that she understood the appeal of this to the audience. It is curious that many survivors of Berlin in the 1920s have been reluctant to admit the part they played in reinforcing the myth of sexual ambiguity that the city advertised to visitors, that mood which, as Isherwood wrote, "was largely a commercial line which the Berliners had instinctively developed in their competition with Paris. Paris had long since cornered the straight-girl market, so what was left for Berlin to offer its visitors but a masquerade of perversions?"

The masculine attire she often wore off-screen in the 1930s, the military uniforms she wore in her role as camp-following entertainer during the war, and the blue jeans, cowboy boots and black leather coats she favoured off-stage during her endless tours in the 1950s and 60s kept the contrast going between her sensual and austere images. For Walker the Prussian element in Dietrich's public persona is all-important. He points out that no other actress has traded so persuasively on the heroic qualities of militarism, and this "romanticism of war" which we should find unpalatable becomes the theme of his book. Early in his account of her life he tells her story of plucking some roses and pressing them into the

hands of French prisoners of war, when she was a child, "à travers un trou dans le fil de fer barbelé"; strangely Walker does not list Dietrich's own book in his brief bibliography. Written with great affection, his book is not a full-scale biography, rather a survey of Dietrich's career set against the context of her films. He draws a comparison between the subject-matter of Dietrich's early Hollywood films and those made at the same time by Garbo, and shows that their treatment had close parallels. It is interesting, as Walker notes, that they also used the same business manager, Harry Edgott. His book has not been perfectly edited and his memory of the scenes he describes is occasionally at fault. However his inside information on Hollywood archives and broad knowledge of the industry unravel many of the tangled stories that have made up the Dietrich legend.

For Navacelle, the seven films with Sternberg are a "near perfect whole and present us with a rarity in the cinema—passion in its absolute form". He suggests that, although he denied it, Sternberg suffered from an unrequited passion for Dietrich which he channelled into his films, and (by implication) into his casting of her as a destructive *femme fatale* and, more interestingly, a sexually ambiguous woman whose mystery either subjects her to be partners to ridicule or exposes in them unattractive feminine qualities. Both these themes reappear in her films made after the partnership with Sternberg ended, for instance in her flirtation with John Wayne in *Seven Sinners* (1940), in which they are both wearing the uniform of American naval officers, or her faintly mocking banter with the otherwise formidable crooked cop Quintan, played by Welles himself, in *Touch of Evil* (1958). Welles becomes, in Navacelle's words, "rather like a small child, in sharp contrast with his behaviour in the rest of the film".

Dietrich's own first attempt to explain herself, a series of articles entitled "How to be loved", published in 1954, led to *Marlene Dietrich's ABC*, first published in 1962. It now appears in a revised edition which is up to date enough to mention Richard Burton in the past tense. There are a few telling one-liners and some recipes (including a very good one for boiled fish) but it has none of the hilarious charm of the classic in this genre, Joan Crawford's *My Way of Life*.

Marlene D. is not a chronological autobiography. It has three long sections—about her schooldays and family life, about her meeting with Sternberg and their film-making and about her experiences during the war. "Traduit de l'américain par Boris Matthews", says the credit but I am not aware that it has been published in America (though it has in Germany—*Nehmt nur mein Leben*, Munich, 1979). Quite well written, it is less revealing than the

best of her comments in Maximilian Schell's film. Apart from the three long sections the book is a series of sketches of people she knew. She is generous about her accompanist and arranger, Burt Bacharach; discreet about Erich Maria Remarque, with whom she lived on and off for years in the late 1930s and early 40s, and silent about Friedrich Hollander. (Hollander wrote the songs for *The Blue Angel*, many of her songs done for records in the 1930s, and most of her numbers for later films such as *Destiny*, *Destiny Rides Again* and *A Foreign Affair*; when he wrote his own autobiography its title was that of the song from *The Blue Angel*—"Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuss auf Liebe eingestellt".)

Dietrich's singing style was, as the critic of a Berlin newspaper, quoted by Walker, wrote, "the sound of an epoch". She frequently reminded interviewers that her early musical and theatrical training had nothing to do with the music-theatre world of Brecht and Weill. Nevertheless the performers with whom she appeared in the 1920s, who influenced her vocal style, had: Claire Waldoff (surely not a "drag queen" as Walker has it), some of whose songs Dietrich recorded late in her career (*Marlene singt Berlin*, "my best record"); Trude Hesterberg, comère of the Wild Stage cabaret and the first Berlin Begbie in *Mahagonny*; and Rosa Valetti, who played the owner's wife in *The Blue Angel*, the original Frau Peachum in *Dreigroschenoper*.

None of these books contains a discography, which is a pity, for Dietrich's recording career was an interesting one, lasting exactly fifty years. There is a wonderful record, made in the mid-1960s, called *Die Damen von der Bühne* (DG 2573 006), on which a group of actresses and singers from the heyday of Berlin cabaret recreate some of their famous numbers. Hesterberg, Valeska Gert, Margo Lion and others make an instructive comparison with Dietrich. One hears immediately that the art of the *chansonnière* or *diseuse* was a recognizable tradition from which she took her method of speaking the words slightly against the music, only singing on the note when it was exactly within her always limited range. The early records, when there was more flexibility in her voice, are much less interesting than the ones made in the 1960s when, although the press continuously harped on her agelessness, she had in her voice and in the way she phrased always a slight catch, as if singing something remembered from a long time ago. This was apparent not only when, as Walker says, "the strangely low register of her voice gave the effect of lullaby to many of her songs, even though the actual sentiments were sensual ones", but to those with military or pacifist themes. Dietrich complains that although there are fifty-five books about her, they have

all got her wrong. And despite several revealing clarifications of chronology and convincing arguments in both Walker and Navacelle's books, the mystery remains. Schell's film *Marlene* gets nearer to the answer. It is a documentary about Dietrich, but it is also a film about Maximilian Schell trying to make a documentary. His conversation with Dietrich, who refused to be photographed ("I've been photographed to death") or to allow her flat or possessions to be photographed, is heard on the soundtrack as we watch him and his assistants editing miles of film; they reconstruct a bit of her apartment, audition a few look-alikes and seem to be having a lot more fun than Dietrich herself who fights the questions and stabs her replies with "kitch" or "rubbish". Frequently she answers his questions with a flat denial of interest, or another question.

The clips from her films, from news-reels and from videos of two or three of her recitals that were broadcast, are superbly juxtaposed with their conversation. "I'm not contracted to be exciting", she says, and it is sometimes more interesting to speculate why she doesn't want to talk about certain people or things than to listen to what she does say. Her voice is freer than one expects but her vehemence is impressive and positive.

The tape in which she and Schell discuss her performances for the Allied and American Forces during the war, her return to Germany and her mostly unhappy association with her native land since 1945, is played against an astonishing coloured film of the ruins of Berlin and the populace at the Brandenburg Gate. Schell congratulates her on her bravery, and says it must have been a difficult decision to make. "No it was not brave or difficult," she replies. "We knew they were killing children, and we wanted to fight them and we wanted the war to end. It was not difficult—there was no choice. The fact that it was Germany, where I was born, made no difference."

It is the contrast between her sexiness, loucheness almost, on the screen and in many of her song performances, and the simplicity and, whatever she says, bravery that are implicit in this conversation that has enshrined Dietrich for Schell, and presumably for a large number of Germans of her own and the younger generation. A blond Aryan woman, the daughter of an army officer, she fought against the Nazis and kept her peace with conscience. "I think I am good", she says at the beginning.

Dietrich was not a great actress in the ordinary sense of the word, but she was a great performer, happy to obey the directors for whom she had the good fortune to work, some of the greatest the cinema has produced (Sternberg, Mamoulian, Lubitsch, Clair, Wilder, Hitchcock, Lang, Welles), and in her work with Schell her luck has held.

Under the slipper

Jim Grace

PRAMEODYA ANANTA TOER
Child of All Nations
Translated with an introduction by Max Lane.
285pp. Penguin. £3.50.
0 14 00 7009 5

It is easy to understand why *Child of All Nations*, the second of the four-part historical tapestry which Prameodya Ananta Toer composed and memorized during his fourteen-year imprisonment on Buru Island, so swiftly became a best-seller in Indonesia, despite its uneven, episodic structure and its occasionally bloated narrative style. Its oral origins among the intellectual élite of concentration camp in 1973 and its subsequent "recall" for publication in 1979, after Prameodya's release, were a much celebrated subversion of authority. Here was an ambitious, argumentative work of imagination produced in circumstances specifically designed to isolate writers and to suppress creativity, to break the spirit of the story-teller.

For the same reason the novel, together with the first section of Prameodya's prison quartet, *This Earth of Mankind*, was finally banned by the Indonesian authorities in 1981. "The Government accused the books of surreptitiously spreading 'Marxism-Leninism'", writes Max Lane in a short but useful introduction to this volume. That view is not supported by the novel itself, unless liberalism and debate are to be counted as the Trojan horses of revolution. Had *Child of All Nations* been conventionally produced by any writer other than Prameodya it is unlikely that its contents would have ruffled the sensibilities in Jakarta. Its tone is nationalistic and historical rather than overtly anti-Suharto, and Prameodya is the least didactic of narrators. As the most gifted member of the "Generation of Forty-Five", Prameodya has

established a reputation not as an "anti-imperialist" pedagogue but as a liberal nationalist. His writing combines the intellectual impetuosity of a recently decolonized and newly literate nation with the vigour and flexibility of a comparatively unproven written language. Bahasa Indonesia, linguistic outpost of Malay, has provided the 13,000 and more islands of post-independence Indonesia with their one cultural unity, and Indonesian writers with a national language and readership.

In *Child of All Nations*, Prameodya once again explores the caste community—the natives and the pures, the indos and the indies—in the port of Surabaya in the early 1900s. Minke, the young journalist whose education and brief adolescent marriage to the Eurasian beauty Annelies Mellema was recounted in *This Earth of Mankind*, here comes of age with the testing of his uncritical acceptance of Europe and colonialism. The Dutch, he is to learn, arrived in the Indies with "two sets of underclothes", one pair of shoes, science, and a swaggering sense of superiority. The islanders responded with the servility of a nation which had "been defeated again and again in battle for hundreds of years" and with the timidity of mortals before gods: "In the stories of our ancestors only the priests and gods wore slippers and shoes. . . . [The Indonesian people] were more afraid of shoes than daggers and machetes."

Minke's transition from "white native" to nationalist is presented as a historical pageant. Its part documentary romance (owing more to Alain-Fournier than Marx) and part debate, with *tableaux vivants* depicting episodes and issues in Indonesian history. Yet though the novel lacks the energy—and the brotherhood—of its predecessor, *Child of All Nations* is a work of great charm and (given the circumstances of its writing) remarkable restraint.

Full of sparkle

Craig Brown

LESTER DAVID and IRENE DAVID
The Shirley Temple Story
242pp. Robson. £8.95.
0 86051 279 7

While Shirley Temple was still in the womb, she was being primed for stardom. Her mother, Gertrude, "believed that a mother can have a strong effect on her unborn child's nature and abilities, a theory in vogue at the time. . . . Accordingly, she listened to good music by the hour, studied great paintings and gazed at the beauties of nature". By 1934, when the six-year-old Shirley already had twenty-four films behind her, Gertrude commented, "Perhaps this prenatal preparation helped make Shirley what she is today."

It is hard to imagine exactly which paintings, music and beauties of nature could metamorphose into such a creature as Shirley. She was born in 1928, when the depression was only months away. In 1931, she was enrolled at Meglin, a school which taught children all the necessary showbusiness skills. Gertrude too enrolled at Meglin, to a special mothers' training course, learning what to say and how to behave at her child's auditions. By 1932, Shirley's career was well under way with a series of ten-minute films satirizing grown-up movies:

bence, *The Runt Page*, in which she played "Lulu Parsnips", a Hollywood columnist, and *Polly-Tix in Washington*, in which she played a coquette dressed in a bra and black lace panties: she was five years old at the time. Other films from this era include *Kid 'n' Africa*, in which a tripwire was employed in order to make all the child actors fall over at the same time.

Between 1934 and 1939, Shirley Temple made eighteen films. Each cost between \$150,000 and \$300,000. Aged seven, she was the biggest box-office star in America. She seems to have been very easy to work with. She could learn her lines, and everybody else's, in seconds and on the few occasions when she was not giving of her best, her mother would shout "Sparkle! Shirley, sparkle!" or "Play it like Shirley Temple would play it!" and all would be well again.

Once in a while, an emotional scene would present difficulties. "Shirley didn't cry easily" the director Allan Dwan admits in this latest biography.

We had to use tricks with her. . . . We'd tell her she couldn't have lunch that day. Or hearing this, she'd start wailing. . . . When she got a little older, the lunch trick didn't work any more, so I'd take her aside and tell her, "Now Shirley, I want you to think that you'll never see your mother again. Think hard, she's gone, gone for good. She'll never, never come back. I'd go on like that and pretty soon the tears would roll out of her."

Those who did not spend their childhoods in bullet-proof limousines fending off rumours that they were actually thirty-year-old midgets might be tempted to shed an honest tear for little Shirley, but both Shirley Temple Black, ex-delegate to the General Assembly of the United Nations, ex-ambassador to Ghana, and her biographers Lester and Irene David would avert their eyes. "I have enjoyed every instant of my life as Shirley Temple" she says now, "I wouldn't have changed it for anything." This biography—her sixth—is defiantly cheerful in tone: "I don't think anybody had the kind of happiness that I had", she remarks, and one can believe she was absolutely sincere.

Shirley is happy, and her biographers are happy, but reading this book is an awkward experience, rather like being confronted with clapping at a funeral. Somehow, there seems little reason to undergo such a uniquely peculiar childhood if one's adult perception of it is destined to be so banal. Perhaps sinking into bossy conventionality was the only response not involving death acceptable to a nation thirsting for her eternal youth. At a preview of *Shirley Temple Story* in 1947, when actor Ronald Reagan became the first person on screen to say, "I love you, will you marry me?" to the nineteen-year-old Shirley Temple, there was such a cry of "Oh, no!" from the invited audience that the scene was cut when the film was released.

Interpreters interpreted

Cairns Craig

CHRISTOPHER BUTLER
Interpretation, Deconstruction and Ideology
159pp. Oxford: Clarendon. £13.50
(paperback, £5.95)
019157924

What comes next? The smoke of the immediate battle over deconstruction having cleared, there is a distinct sense of people looking around to see what the sides now are. Christopher Butler's *Interpretation, Deconstruction and Ideology* has the feel of a report from the front where exhausted troops are hoping for a peacemaker: it is both a map of the contemporary "crisis" in literary studies, charting the strengths and weakness of competing strategies from ludic structuralism to scientific Marxism, and, at the same time, an argument designed to justify a "pragmatist approach" which "is not concerned with the pursuit of the ultimate 'truth' about the text". The outcome of the past ten years of debate is, Butler suggests, that "we must ask not, 'Is my interpretation true?' but more self-consciously perhaps, 'What language for my interpretation am I using, and for what purpose?'"

It is a large task for a fairly slim book; if, inevitably, its descriptions of the various positions are sometimes rather simplified (especially when it seeks to show them at work in specific texts), and if its positive proposals emerge rather elliptically through its decision of the competing alternatives, none the less as an interim report it is an effective piece of work. It will be useful to those who feel they have not quite yet grasped the grounds of the various oppositional modes in criticism, and the difference in their oppositions, and it will be a refresher course for those who find that the arguments slip easily from memory when they are faced with the practical business of dealing with a text or teaching a student.

The two purposes of the book do, however, sometimes get in each other's way. Butler attempts to give a sympathetic account of deconstructive and Marxist strategies, using them to reveal the weaknesses of traditional critical theories, but his exposition of their case will often slide into disagreement not through argument but through the voice of an impersonal "one" which interjects itself into his writing as the mouthpiece of antipathetic responses to their radicalism. One feels that deconstruction in this case has left a lot of disordered pieces just lying around, with very little of that constraining thematic construction encountered in [Derrida's] more philosophical work. One might add that it is an invitation to play of a rather tired kind. Who might? It is almost as though the voice of the "common reader" or "common critic" (wheeled by Galilei's brilliance) has been invoked from nowhere to pass a judgement that Butler, too conscious perhaps of the rigour of his opponents, is unwilling to assert. The audience subjected to this performance may admire its virtuosity, but still wish to ask what the point of it is. "May" and "might" proliferate, fabricating touchstones of audience response which connive with the reader in a sense of shared and violated values.

Butler's own argument as to the nature of interpretation has a double thrust. He insists on a pragmatic conception of language and of meaning, using M. A. K. Halliday's notions of a social semiotics to suggest that even metaphorical statements (which are testable by being paraphrased "into statements for which we might hypothetically be able to assess truth or falsity") are grounded in our common reality. Just as the understanding of a sentence is only possible in a pragmatically defined context, so understanding of a whole text demands a culturally conditioned "meaning system" with which to frame it. Against structuralists, therefore, Butler would hold that there is a determining relationship between language and the external world; he does not, however, propose a return to a mimetic or referential theory of the language of literature, with its implications of an unmediated perception of what is really there, but "a relationship which is consistent with the shifting, culturally relative, and often metaphorical frameworks through which we see the world in the first place". Against those, therefore, who would want criticism to be the unravelling of the "truth" about the text

and its relationship to the world, Butler argues that there is no going back from the self-consciousness of deconstruction - the "frame" we choose to adopt in interpreting the text will determine the kinds of answers we will get.

The tone of Butler's argument is not one of resigned acceptance to the unfortunate limitations of meaningfulness. Rather he offers a bracing confrontation with the need to examine the purposes by which we guide our interpretative strategies; though the "text alone under-determines its own context", we can still have meaningful disputes about how we justify the context we adopt, so that "even the relativist will attempt to adjudicate between frameworks on grounds of value". Where Derrida transferred the creative play of the text from the author to the critic, Butler seems to be transferring the moral stringency that criticism used to find in works of literature to the choices of critical method by which the works - with their unavoidable ambiguity - will be interpreted.

In North America there has been a tendency for deconstruction to slide back towards ordinary language philosophy for a way out of its sceptical impasse; Butler's theory has much in common with that development, seeking not the truth of a critical method but the rules of the "game" that is being played. Philosophical problems thus become alternatives within a single set of procedures rather than competitors for the same ground, and each critical method is seen as appropriate within its own pragmatic application of the rules of the game. We have to accept no "truths" but practices, and recognize that "we are concerned in interpretation with the logic and justification of the institutional practice of putting into circulation critical interpretative paraphrases of texts instead of the text, for certain purposes which will always deviate to some degree from those of the text". Despite its own claims to the opposite, therefore, deconstruction is in the end as pragmatic as the pragmatist would wish, because the "scepticism and the free play it licenses are supposed to be more worthwhile activities within the institutions of interpretation" than traditional modes of criticism.

The trouble with pragmatism, of course, is that either it licenses everything and gives you no ground of your own to stand on or else it covertly sneaks in a set of values defining what is useful. Butler's pragmatic theory defuses the intensity of the conflict over criticism by giving all competing systems a place within the institutional practices of the day, while at the same time implying that deconstruction and Marxism are both flawed by their inability to accept this plurality. Pluralism, thus, becomes the valued end of pragmatism, and the denial of that end is manifested by those who champion language theories which do not, like the one Butler proposes, accept the fundamental (or is it only a "pragmatic") truth that language operates by a "pragmatics of discourses".

This Can't Be

the place of consequence, the station of his embrace.

Or else I'm not son enough to see
the innocence and the spiritual fiddlings
in the uneven floorboards and joists
in the guttural speech of the pipes
in the limp and the lack of the heat.

All we need, all we really need is light!
And let there be a roof with no leaks.
Oh father landlord, fill up all our breaches.

He gives himself to the cracks, into the chinks
my father lowers his bone,
the do-it-yourself funeral. He holds the wires
in his teeth. He strips the insulation back:
If it's black, it's juiceless; if it's red, elegiac.

BRUCE SMITH

The telling, not the told

Ann Jefferson

F. K. STANZEL
A Theory of Narrative
Translated by Charlotte Goedsche
308pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50.
0521247195

The appearance in English of F. K. Stanzel's study of narrative is at once a shaming and an encouraging event. Shaming in that it reveals the existence of a long and substantial German tradition of narratology which French and Anglo-Saxon scholars have tended either to undervalue or completely to overlook. And encouraging in that it offers positive evidence that, despite important differences in national literary and theoretical origins, there is considerable international agreement concerning approaches to narrative and the broad terms of its analysis.

Stanzel's study, which develops and refines his original formulation of the issues published in 1955 (thus predating both Wayne Booth and the French structuralists by a good few years) endorses the opposition between what the Russian Formalists called *fabula* and *syuzhet*, or the French structuralists *histoire* and *discours*. Similarly, he anticipates the distinction that Gérard Genette made so much of in his *Narrative Discourse* (1972) between *arretion* and *focalization* (to use Genette's terms), or narrators and reflectors (to use Stanzel's). Numerous other familiar oppositions from different moments and locations in modern theory and criticism (scene/summary, telling/showing, etc) also appear, slightly recast, in Stanzel's "typology of narrative situations", which is the phrase he uses to describe his theoretical enterprise.

This typology is not a grammar of actions, like Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* or a good deal of French structuralist narratology, but a survey of the various situations in which narrative events are recounted, a territory that most students have explored under the guidance of Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961). Like Genette, however, Stanzel regards action and narration, *histoire* and *discours*, as equally indispensable elements of narrative; but unlike Genette, he concentrates exclusively on narration, a procedure which he justifies with the rather unusual claim that the narrating situation (or what he calls "mediacy") is the decisive constituent feature of narrative. Here he differs considerably from the main structuralist tradition which set out to tackle narrative in all its cultural manifestations, non-verbal as well as verbal, oral as well as written, popular as well as "literary". Stanzel's view leads to the conclusion that *Tristram Shandy*, *Ulysses* and *Malone Dies*, with their obvious concern with the rendering of mediacy, are more *narrative* than James Bond or Agatha Christie and other such books that one reads primarily for the

plot. In defence of this unremittingly literary approach to his subject, Stanzel demonstrates the absence of narrativity in snippets of *histoire* which don't have any element of mediacy, such as chapter headings, synopses and outlines taken from Dickens and the notebooks of Henry James. Nevertheless, it is clear that for Stanzel the interest of his argument does not lie in the area of out-and-out theory, but in the establishment of precise terminology and methodological protocol; and the bulk of his book is devoted to the elaboration of what he calls his "typological circle".

This circle is intersected by three key axes, each of which is polarized into a basic opposition: thus, there is the axis of *person*, whose opposition turns on whether the narrator is inside or outside the world of his story; there is the axis of *perspective*, whose opposition is based on whether or not the novel is seen through the internal perspective of the character; and third, the axis of *mode* which distinguishes between narrators (who speak) and reflectors (who don't). The originality of these categories is not in their content, but in their arrangement. Stanzel sees all narrative situations as being composed of the three basic elements (person, perspective, mode), but in differing combinations where one will always be dominant. This dominance is not absolute, for in many situations the categories shade off into each other. The advantage of the model is that complex and marginal cases can be included within it instead of being either ignored or distorted to fit some *a priori* schema. As Stanzel says, novels and short stories are not always written within a clearly demarcated category, and furthermore, their narrative situations tend to shift end alter as the text itself unfolds: viz, moments of free indirect speech within the third-person mode of Jane Austen or the first-person mode of *David Copperfield*. In other words, the circular arrangement of the categories provides a typological model which, ideally, should allow one to account for every narrative situation, however idiosyncratic, however complicated.

There is something wonderfully positive and reassuring about this approach with its promise that no literary text need ever defeat us, and that there will always be what Stanzel calls "trigonometric surveying points" which will allow us to chart and describe the topological phenomena of any and every landscape. But if this is good pedagogy, it does make for distinctly dull theory, and one should, perhaps, be asking oneself whether one actually wants to rule out the possibility of ever being stymied by an intractable text, and whether such optimism is theoretically desirable. In Stanzel's flexible world anything goes, since there is nothing normative about his categories, and adaptability and tolerance are the essence of his system. By the same token, however, he is denying himself any means of describing the deviation and the transgressions which critics have regarded as the prime features of many of the novels he discusses. What others see as subversion, Stanzel sees as a sign of the novel form calmly evolving and moving on into new narrative territory, colonizing new areas of the generic model which, he says, has existed since the beginnings of fiction quietly waiting for actual literary practice to catch up with it.

With Stanzel's system one can never say that norms have been transgressed, expectations flouted and readers left feeling confounded. The problem arises because of his use of the term "theory" to describe an enterprise better formulated as a historical and methodological one. He insists that his typological circle is theoretically, not historically inspired, and it is this refusal to give his categories a historical dimension that, paradoxically perhaps, makes it impossible for him to incorporate transgression. All the theoretical space on his model has now been used up with actual historical development, leaving nowhere for future practice to evolve.

This historical perspective also supports the temptation to see the typology primarily as an extremely useful set of methodological tools, despite the title's claim to be offering a *theory* of narrative. But then, just as method tends not to generate very interesting theory, theory doesn't always make for very helpful method, and what we have in Stanzel's book is a usable and comprehensive methodology.

More than meets the eye

R. S. Woolhouse

D. W. HAMLYN
Metaphysics
230pp. Cambridge University Press. £20
(paperback, £5.95).
0521244498
STEPHAN KÖRNER
Metaphysics: Its structure and function
238pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50.
0521264960
PATRICK SUPPES
Probabilistic Metaphysics
251pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £19.50.
0631133321

In the 1930s metaphysics was out. The verification-principle led A. J. Ayer and the logical positivists to see it as a body of "nonsensical utterances", the greatest part of which is "merely the embodiment of humdrum errors". Despite this "elimination", however, there has in more recent years been a flow of books unashamedly devoted to metaphysics; here are three more. An instance of this shift of perception about what it is possible, let alone interesting or profitable, to philosophize about is the fact that D. W. Hamlyn devotes at least two chapters of his *Metaphysics* to the notion of substance, something which Ayer felt able to dismiss in one paragraph.

As Professor Hamlyn conceives it, metaphysics "sets out to the most general and abstract terms what must hold good of conscious beings and the world in which they live if that world is to constitute reality for them". So put, his conception is itself most general and abstract. It works out in detailed practice as a discussion of the distinction between appearance and reality; of ideas concerning substances, essences, and universals; of space and time; of minds, and of personal identity.

The book is full of felicities, illuminations, and useful clarifications. One, picked at random, is the insistence on the difference between the truism that we know of things only through our perceptions of them or as they appear to us, and the contentious idea that we know, not reality, but only our perceptions or a realm of appearances. This latter idea, which requires underpinning by a Cartesian approach to the mind, easily leads to an idealism which holds that all there are are perceptions and appearances. Kant's view of the matter is, as Hamlyn explains, rather complex. He rejects such an idealism. We have experience of an "empirically real" world, objective by comparison with various subjective mental states we might be in when hallucinating, for example. But though empirically real our world is, for Kant, "transcendently ideal". Though objective it is a world which we know only through the medium of the categories and forms of our experience. It thus contrasts with the reality of things-in-themselves, to which experience can have no access.

Something akin to this Kantianism, which Hamlyn merely discusses, pervades the whole structure of Stephan Körner's *Metaphysics: Its structure and function*. For Professor Körner each one of us has an immanent metaphysics; each has a categorical framework of beliefs and concepts which confer inter-subjectivity on parts of the "subjectively given" - thus producing a distinction between a publicly experienced world and our purely mental states. Our transcendent metaphysics are our beliefs, if any, about the relationship between this public world of experience and some reality which transcends the constraints of our categorical inter-subjective concepts.

Körner does not give us exposition and discussion of various views on philosophical topics. What he does give, besides explanation of what a framework of organizing categories, principles, and beliefs is, and how it may change, is what he calls "philosophical anthropology": an empirical account of the various immanent metaphysical beliefs that human beings have. Thus, for example, in his thinking and approach to the world, a person may (or may not) accept the principle of excluded middle; he may (or, improbably, may not) allow that predicates applicable to the public world (e.g. "green") are inexact and have fuzzy borders. Or again, and in addition to these formal logical principles, people have substantive principles concerned with material objects

which have identity through time and change. Besides identifying them Körner describes in detail what structure such principles do or would contribute to the world as we experience it. So, for instance, he outlines the development of a logic of inexactness and discusses the unification into persisting objects of distinct material object "phases" or "time-slices".

He does not concentrate exclusively on immanent metaphysics. He also describes various positions one might take up about the difference between transcendent reality and the world of inter-subjective experience and whether it is describable by means of our concepts. He concludes with some remarks about his own transcendent beliefs about freedom, God, and immortality - the topics which Kant picked out as the subject-matter of metaphysics.

Despite appendixes and interludes concerned with probabilistic technicalities, Patrick Suppes's *Probabilistic Metaphysics* is the most purely enjoyable of these three books. Most of it was given as the 1974 Hågerström lectures in Sweden and in its easy style it shows the mark of relaxed presentation to an audience very willing to listen. Not unlike Hamlyn, Professor Suppes often begins from views of historical figures. But in most cases no real argument is based on them. They serve rather as pleasant foils for Suppes's amiable contentiousness. This is felt from the start when, in sharp opposition to Körner's rather moving final remarks, Suppes forthrightly rejects any suggestion that in doing metaphysics he should say

anything at all about God or immortality. "Most philosophers do not take these ideas seriously today. . . certainly I do not." Feathers ruffled by this will not be smoothed by Suppes's later casual conflation of astrology and theology.

What people do take seriously, says Suppes, are certain other metaphysical ideas which arc, he argues throughout the book, equally mistaken. Thus it is widely and seriously believed that the future is determined by the past; that every event has a sufficient cause; that knowledge must be grounded in certainty; that scientific knowledge and method can in principle be unified. As against such ideas Suppes develops a "probabilistic metaphysics" according to which the world, put generally and impressionistically, is random, unsystematic, and lacking in sharp edges. Determinism is false, for the fundamental laws of nature are probabilistic; many quantities in nature have no exact value; different sciences are not parts of a whole and their practitioners simply speak past each other; even mathematics is not a certain a priori science but is open to correction by empirical evidence. Suppes's illustrative examples used in support of his claims have a refreshing simplicity and challenging bluntness. "The endless babble of human speech" is adduced as being something undetermined and completely unpredictable. A page from a neurophysiological journal is quoted as showing that the sciences are diverging and do not share a common language.

The standard response to Suppes will be to

appeal to complexity, ignorance, and the practical difficulties of exact measurement. There is apparently random variation in the annual produce from a given piece of land, but this, it will be said, is not in principle inexplicable; it is just that some of the relevant variables are unknown. Suppes will stand no such soft evasions: his reply is, in effect, that hidden variables are not so much underlying causes as lost causes. In some cases there is argument for this. There is, he claims, a deep theoretical case to be made for basic randomness in quantum mechanics. In other cases - as for example that of the phenomenon of smelt - his strategy is simply to shake our complacency, to try to make us see on the basis of the evidence that we should not be so automatically ready with the standard response about which there is something empty and pious.

In the end, though, one is left with the feeling that there is more to be said. Suppes is right to say that a look at particular sciences hardly encourages the idea that there is some underlying unity. But he himself talks of the fundamental laws of nature as though there were some one set of these, and the rationalistic conception of there being just one all-embracing system of truths about the world is not easily dislodged. No doubt the pluralism of metaphysical styles these three books show is good, but it seems rather too quick to say, as Suppes does, that "pluralism of languages of science is as desirable a feature as the irreducible plurality of political views in a democracy".

Nice strategies

J. E. J. Altham

ROBERT AXELROD
The Evolution of Cooperation
251pp. Basic Books. £12.50.
0465021220

This short book is a fascinating contribution to the theory of cooperation, and is written in a clear, informal style that makes it a joy to read.

Robert Axelrod starts by setting out the so-called Prisoners' Dilemma, the most famous structure in the theory of games. It represents the fundamental problem that occurs when the rational pursuit by each individual of his own ends leads to an outcome that is bad for all. In the game there are two players, each of whom may either cooperate or defect. For each the best outcome results if he defects while the other cooperates, and the worst if he cooperates and the other defects. The second best for each results if both cooperate, and the second worst if both defect. It follows that it is better for a player to defect than to cooperate, whichever the other does. So if each pursues what is best for him, both defect, receiving their second worst outcome, worse than if both had cooperated. The most momentous instance is the arms race, where cooperation represents disarmament and defection a continued build-up of weapon systems. The great powers appear trapped in the dangerous and inferior state of mutual defection.

The trap is inescapable, given the structure described, if it is known that there is to be only one interaction, a single play of the game; but if the setting of the game recurs indefinitely often for the same players, strategies can be considered that permit players to take into account the history of their interactions, and in some circumstances a mutually cooperative outcome can result. Axelrod conceived the excellent idea of inviting psychologists, political scientists and other experts to submit their favoured strategies for entry in a prisoners' dilemma tournament, in which each played every other strategy in turn five times, with 200 moves each time. The large number of moves was needed to allow the effects of the strategies to be fully revealed, and was made practicable by running the tournament on a computer. Results of the tournament were analysed and sent out with invitations to a wider body of people to take part in a second tournament, also run on a computer. The participants in the second tournament thus had the opportunity to submit improved strategies based on what they could learn from the first.

The whole exercise proved remarkably fruitful. The winning entry in the first tournament was submitted by the dozen of students of the prisoners' dilemma, Anatol Rapoport. It was an extremely simple strategy known as TIT FOR TAT. A player using it cooperates on the first move, and then does whatever the other did on the previous move. Cooperation is rewarded with cooperation, defection punished by defection. Rapoport, with great insight, submitted the same entry in the second tournament, and won again, defeating all strategies devised in the knowledge that his had won the first tournament. This double victory is all the more surprising in view of the fact that there is no strategy that is best independently of the plan the other player is following. Reflection on the success of TIT FOR TAT and the performance of others led Axelrod to the conclusion that in a wide variety of environments it is a good idea to be nice, provokable, forgiving, and clear. To be nice here is never to be the first to defect; to be provokable is to punish defections by answering with defection; to be forgiving is to ignore the other player's previous defections having once punished; and to be clear is to have a sufficiently straightforward strategy for other players to grasp it from one's behaviour, thereby enabling them to respond appropriately. The reader is thus given an elegant occasion for the satisfaction yielded by confirmation of conventional wisdom through a perspicuous model.

The next step was to adopt an ecological perspective. Further tournaments were run in sequence: Strategies that did well in one would have their representation increased in the next, while the proportions of unsuccessful strategies went down. In simulation of the survival of the fittest. Since the success of any strategy depends on what others are doing used, and since the environment of strategies changes from one generation to the next, it is far from obvious that initially successful strategies will continue to maintain themselves. It did turn out, however, that TIT FOR TAT and other nice strategies continued to thrive.

In the purely ecological tournaments no new strategies emerge, but still more interesting results are obtained by evolutionary simulations that bring in new strategies, which are analogous to and in some applications identical with the outcome of mutations. If we were all using nice strategies, and hence cooperating with one another, could a mutant strategy disrupt this happy state of affairs and thrive? If we were all defecting egoists without any cooperative behaviour, could a mutant successfully introduce cooperation? These crucial questions

turn out to have encouraging answers. Provided that future interactions are not discounted too heavily, the nice TIT FOR TAT resists invasion not only by an individual mutant, but even by a cluster of them. And a population of defectors can easily be invaded by a cluster of mutants practising TIT FOR TAT. Thus cooperation can get started in a world of egoists and thrive. Further, for a population of nice strategists to resist invasion, it is essential that its members retaliate immediately against non-cooperation.

These ideas are used to illuminate the development of the live-and-let-live system in trench warfare in 1914-18, and then applied more widely and speculatively in a chapter on cooperation in biological systems, where they seem in some cases to provide a promising alternative to explanations of altruism based on kinship.

The last two parts of the book are less consistently interesting. There is a certain amount of repetition, and while sharp points continue to be made, some of the observations are trite. We do not need to be told, for example, that cooperation is easier to attain in a society whose members care about each other's welfare. Axelrod could usefully have addressed himself more fully to the classical theory of government, according to which a central authority with force at its command is necessary to save men from the prisoners' dilemma they would be in without it. To put it crudely, in the absence of an external deterrent, it is rational not to respect the person and property of others: If others themselves show such respect, a man does better by exploiting them; if they do not, he would be a fool to do so himself.

The limitations of this argument have been brought out particularly well by Michael Taylor in his recent book *Community, Anarchy and Liberty*. Taylor concludes, using a cogent combination of theoretical and empirical considerations, that stable anarchy is possible only in a community where beliefs and values are held in common, where relations between members are direct and many-sided, and where reciprocity is practised. In such a community, the threat of withdrawal of reciprocity is of great importance as a method of social control. These conditions are similar to those that Axelrod shows to be favourable to cooperation. For it is in just such communities that strategies tend to be nice, provokable, and clear, and people attach importance to good relations in the future, knowing that they must go on dealing in many ways with the same people. The consilience between these two approaches is striking, and invites further exploration.

The limits of disputation

Dennis Nineham

STEPHEN SYKES
The Identity of Christianity: Theologians and the essence of Christianity from Schleiermacher to Barth
349pp. SPCK. £15 (paperback, £8.50).
0 281 04088 5

The dense, but clearly expressed, argument of this book carries on from the frequent attempts made in the last century and the early part of this to define the essence of Christianity. The rise of biblical criticism, and in general the historical consciousness associated with the Enlightenment, meant that it was no longer possible to represent contemporary Christianity as identical with the Christianity of earlier periods, either doctrinally or practically. In what sense then could it be claimed that modern Christianity was continuous with the Christianity of the past? At the time, *Wesen-analysis* was popular in German academic circles and theologians began to ask whether it was possible to isolate an essence of Christianity such that it must be present in any religious position which was to qualify as Christian. It was hoped that such an essence, if it could be discovered, would take the place of traditional orthodoxy as a criterion of what was genuinely Christian.

The best-known, though by no means the most acute, of these searches after the essence

of Christianity, was contained in a series of popular lectures given by the Berlin professor Adolf Harnack, in 1899-1900 and published under the title *Das Wesen des Christentums* (the English translation, a best seller, republished as recently as 1958, was given the title *What is Christianity?*). The German sociologist and theologian Ernst Troeltsch was so dissatisfied with Harnack's treatment of the matter that he subjected the whole enterprise to a long and detailed examination (1903, reproduced in an expanded version in 1913) in the course of which he convinced most of his readers - though not himself, entirely - that it is in principle impossible to isolate such an essence on any but a quite unacceptably subjective basis. Since then *Wesen-analysis* has fallen into disrepute generally, the more so in theology because of the trenchant criticisms made of it by Karl Barth.

Stephen Sykes (Regius Professor of Divinity elect at Cambridge) chronicles and analyses all this with consummate skill. Beginning with Schleiermacher, to whom he devotes considerable space, he expounds the contributions of various thinkers, including such Roman Catholics as Drey, Loisy and above all Cardinal Newman, whose treatment he greatly admires and discusses fully.

The upshot of his account, which occupies the central and longest part of the book, is to confirm that there can be no progress along the lines of *Wesen-analysis*. Professor Sykes's own contribution is the confessedly modest one of suggesting new ways in which the problem of

the continuing identity of Christianity can be formulated and discussed fruitfully. There has been a tendency to view the matter almost exclusively from the point of view of doctrine, but Sykes follows Ninian Smart in insisting that there is much more to religions than their doctrines. In the case of Christianity, for example, there is what is here called "the tradition of inwardness", there is worship, both public and private, and there is the social embodiment of the faith; one of Sykes's subordinate themes is the way power has been exercised in relation to all of these by theologians as well as by popes and other church leaders. He brings out what considerable power theologians wield in the Church.

Borrowing a conception from W. B. Gallie, he argues that Christianity is an "essentially contested concept", that is to say, a matter which can fruitfully be discussed on the basis of perfectly respectable arguments but is not fully resolvable by argument. It follows of course that "the project of complete doctrinal agreement . . . is inherently implausible. Christianity does not possess, and cannot aspire to, that degree of settled precision." For discussions about an essentially contested concept to be fruitful, the contestants need not necessarily be agreed about method, but they must all be operating within certain boundaries, even if these are not precisely specifiable; and Sykes makes a suggestion about what may constitute these boundaries in the case of Christianity. All those participating must agree on some such formal definition of the Christian religion

as that it is "the deeds of Jesus set in the context provided by creation beliefs and eschatology". He also argues that theologians taking part in the discussion should be participants in Christian worship, and devotes his final chapter to a brief but nuanced discussion of the relation between worship and doctrine in Christianity. The attempt to do so much in a book of this length was bound to result in great density of argument. Though it would have cost us part of a fascinating and most scholarly essay in the history of ideas, Professor Sykes might profitably have curtailed his historical account so as to have had more space to expound his own views. These would benefit from fuller treatment in a number of places, most notably perhaps where he seeks to meet the objection that the question whether a position is *Christian* is so much less important than the question whether it is *true*, as to be relatively trivial. His answer, though forceful and interesting, is too briefly stated to carry full conviction, and the same applies to the way he deals with the question whether contemporary Christianity needs to have even the relative continuity with earlier forms he regards as essential. Here there certainly appears to be some cutting of corners, if not indeed begging of questions.

It would be ungenerous, however, to end on such a note: this is a thoughtful, scholarly and open-minded book which throws a great deal of light on many unexpected places. It will set right much misconception and muddled thinking and rightly influence Christian theology for a long time to come.

Compulsive commentator

John Whale

CLIVE L. RAWLINS
William Barclay: The authorized biography
719pp. Exeter: Paternoster Press. £19.95.
0 85364 392 X
JAMES MARTIN
William Barclay: A personal memoir
104pp. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press.
Paperback, £2.50.
0 7152 0579 X

William Barclay died at the age of seventy in 1978. He had made his name in the 1950s, when as a Glasgow don he brought out - at the invitation of the Church of Scotland - twenty volumes of New Testament commentary in seven years. He seemed to recede into obscurity: he delivered modern learning, yet heartened simple faith. In total, the little red editions have sold more than three million copies.

There was much more activity besides. Barclay wrote a pile of other books. For three decades he turned out two or three a year; six years after his death, sixty-eight of them were still in print. His most typical and successful publication, *The Plain Man's Book of Prayers*, has sold three hundred thousand copies at least. He was an assiduous journalist: during his commentary period he was also writing the whole of "the William Barclay page" for preachers and teachers in the *British Weekly*, and he reviewed regularly for that and the *Expository Times*. At Glasgow University he had a lectureship in New Testament Language and Literature, and later a chair in Divinity and Biblical Criticism. He served on the Apostrophe Translation panel of the *New English Bible*. He preached most Sundays. Towards the end of his life he broadcast constantly, though the BBC mostly confined his Glasgow growl within Scotland.

Barclay was popular because he walked an acceptable, even if adjustable, line between the New Testament criticism he lived with and the evangelicallism he had been brought up in. (His father had been a lay-preaching bank manager in Wick and in Motherwell.) He was unsound enough on the Virgin Birth to incur the wrath of Glasgow's Protestant bullies under Pastor Jack Gless; he saw point in the adoptionist heresy, which contends that Jesus was the adopted rather than the natural son of God. But wherever he could he laid the reassurance on thick. Of Luke as a writer, for example, he commented: "When we read Acts we may be quite sure that no historian ever had better sources and no historian ever used his sources more accurately and more honestly."

Barclay buttonholed his readers and jollied them along.

He was not held back by a critical intellect. In a prepared address while he was still a Church of Scotland minister in Renfrew during the Second World War, he listed as equal examples of high seriousness four writers: Gibbon, Milton, Virgil and Jerome K. Jerome.

He was popular, too, just because he was so prodigiously industrious. Volume sales were begotten of volume production. He could write anywhere, and did. He was helped in the necessary detachment by the deafness - outcome of a boyhood attack of scarlet fever - that put the gravel into his voice. The cumbrous, whistling hearing-aids that were among his life-long props could be switched off to secure laconic silence.

He worked compulsively. The one job he turned down was the Church of Scotland moderatorship, a merely decorative function. "The only thing in life that matters", he reaffirmed in old age, "is work." Clive L. Rawlins, his biographer, pleads: "It was not so much that he could not say No as that he could not let a fruitful opportunity to serve pass ungrasped"; and Rawlins chronicles every such opportunity in merciless detail, from school magazine to Zeffirelli's *Jesus of Nazareth* (Barclay wrote, *ex post facto*, the book of the film).

The overvalued commodity was time. James Martin (whose rival memoir to Rawlins's is hardly more than a pamphlet of reminiscences) quotes his subject as saying: "I never spend time reading over anything I have written. It would waste too much time."

There was a price to be paid for this preoccupation; and not entirely by Barclay himself. Rawlins's breath-by-breath account shows the Barclay marriage to have been an increasingly empty one. Kate Barclay had been a daughter of the innkeeper, but in her husband's life there was less and less that she could share. When their daughter died in a sailing accident, he had the therapy of work; she hardly even had her husband's company. Her health and her faith failed. On Barclay's own later admission, his multitudinous readers did not include his own wife.

SPCK have published in the series *Issues in Religion and Theology*, which collects important and often inaccessible articles together with a survey of the present state of each question, *Creation in the Old Testament*, edited by Bernard W. Anderson (178pp. £3.50, 0 281 04100 8), and *The Kingdom of God*, edited by Bruce Chilton (162pp. £4.50, 0 281 04091 5).

Paperbacks

Biography and memoirs

STELLA BOWEN. *Drawn from Life*. 253pp. Virgo. £4.50, 0 8608 655 8. Chronologically speaking, the third woman in Ford Madox Ford's life, after his wife and Violet Hunt (Sylvia of *Parade's End*) was an Australian art student, Stella Bowen. She survived about a decade of the impossible Fordie, enduring the period when he decided to keep pigs and give up writing (hence the sketch of him in the cottage with the leaking thatch/creaking latch in Ezra Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mowbrley*), and bearing him a daughter. Ford then took up briefly with a lady with a dilapidated cardboard suitcase - Jean Rhys - before flitting off to the States and his final consort, Janice Biala. Stella Bowen remained all along the girl from Adelaide, and she writes wide-eyed and naïvely about pre-1914 London coteries and the Lost Generation in Paris. But the book is full of good verbal snapshots, even if Stella's undying gratitude to Ford, who had used her then chucked her aside, makes her an odd addition to the Virgo list. *Drawn from Life* was first published in 1941 and reviewed in the TLS of August 16 that year.

NICOLETTE DAVAS. *Two Flanboyant Fathers*. 287pp. Hamish Hamilton. £4.95, 0 241 11404 7. Nicolette Davas's autobiography was first published in 1966 (it was reviewed in the TLS of February 23, 1967) and its reappearance after a spate of publications relating to Augustus John and his circle (notably Michael Holroyd's two-volume biography) confirms its permanent interest as a charming and evocative memoir of the John ménage. For it was Augustus John, of course, who was one of the flamboyant fathers whom she adopted after being deserted by her own real father, the Irish painter, writer - and talker - Francis Macnab. She writes of the "overflow of vitality" in the John circle, but Dylan Thomas (who married Mrs Davas's younger sister Caitie) provides a third element of rumbustiousness in the story. There is a gaiety and honesty about the book, composed with real skill though in an apparently random manner, which are very beguiling.

WILLIAM PLOMER (Editor). *Kilvert's Diary 1870-1879*. 378pp. Penguin. £2.95, 0 14 059 008 0. FREDERICK GRICE. *Francis Kilvert and His World*. 257pp. Callan Books. £5.00, 0 573 788. William Plomer's one-volume Kilvert, selected from the three originally published in 1938-40, has been reprinted as part of the "Penguin Country Library". The (indexed) text is clear enough not to need explanatory apparatus, though Plomer's two pages of Introduction are a meagre offering and one could have wished for more extensive discussion of the diary and its writer, possibly from Plomer's own additional writings. The discursive, repellent, but enthusiastic miscellany by Frederick Grice provides us with a compendium of Kilvertian research, drawn from local newspapers and a variety of genealogical informants. Some local details add to our appreciation, not least Kilvert's grateful speeches at his wedding presentation a month or so before his death; and there is a clear-headed assessment of the diarist's place in young girls. Plomer's introduction mentions almost incidentally the destruction of most of the original diary notebooks, and Mr Grice tells this regrettable story in considerable detail.

CYNTHIA AND TONY REAVELL. *E. R. Benson: Mr Benson remembered in Rye, and the World of Tilling*. 102pp. Martello Books, Rye. £5.95, 0 950 6824 2X. E. R. Benson spent the last twenty years of his life at Lamb House, Rye (where Henry James had been a tenant; it is now a National Trust property). It was there that he wrote his Mapp and Lucia novels, which draw heavily on local topography and personalities for their cumulative comic evocation of "Tilling" and its characters. Mr and Mrs Reavell have produced a short biography of Benson, which includes a sensitive account of his private life, and have added to it the detailed but usually uninteresting memorabilia of his former valet Charlie Tomlin, together with contributions by others, from a housemaid to Sir Steven Runciman, who knew Benson well at his home in Kent. The result is somewhat patchy and repetitious, but it will be of interest to enthusiasts for the Mapp and Lucia series

(now enjoying a periodic revival); they will also be served well by a key to the real-life originals of the novels.

Fishing

TED LAMB. *The Penguin Guide to Freshwater Fishing in Britain and Ireland*. 260pp with maps. Penguin. £5.95, 0 14 046593 6. *The Penguin Guide to Sea Fishing in Britain and Ireland* 110pp with maps. Penguin. £4.95, 0 14 046592 8. From Tebbit's Bridge to Pearson's Flash, and Shoberness to Speyside, the Freshwater guide offers a handy work of reference to the rich diversity of our inland fisheries, arranged geographically by region. The scope of the waters covered includes lakes, ponds, rivers, reservoirs, lochs and drains, and information is furnished about the relevant seasons, regulations, local addresses and licenses. For tourist and intrepid native angler alike the guide will provide the essential details for approaching practically any club, hotel or public water in a particular area, but this very comprehensiveness means that descriptions of specific venues are necessarily rather skeletal, while practical advice on technique (both game and coarse) is perhaps wisely excluded altogether - as are prices, which rapidly date such gazetteers.

More readable is the companion volume on that burgeoning but so unpredictable sport of sea-angling; this naturally has fewer specific locations to cover, and concentrates more fully on the problems and probability of encountering certain species of fish, the characteristics of various quarries from porbeagle to dab, and directions on digging baits, hiring boats, and tackling up. Ted Lamb is himself a highly experienced angler ashore and afloat, and is amiably stern about weather prognostics, tides, and boat safety; his two books are good value for money for devotees of the nation's most popular outdoor pastime.

Social History

NORMAN LEWIS. *The Honoured Society: The Sicilian Mafia observed*. 274pp. Eland Books. £4.95, 0 907871 80 1. The *Honoured Society* is considered the most important study in English on the Mafia. First published in 1964 and reviewed in the TLS on June 18 of that year, it focuses on the growth of the Mafia in Sicily and southern Italy in the decades following the Second World War. The book goes back to the early history of the Mafia and traces its progress after the failure of Mussolini's campaign on suppression. The sometimes unwitting help given to Mafia leaders by the United States Army in 1943, the role played by the southern aristocracy in selling feudal lands to a new breed of self-made men, the operation of the post-war black market and the establishment of a hierarchy of power and fear which grew out of the old Mafia are all described in detail. The new Mafia's links with the church and with the Christian Democrat Party are unravelled. The chronicle of the operations of local Mafia chiefs, a catalogue of petty crime, corruption and seemingly unending revenge murders, derives some of its fascination from the combination of elaborate codes of behaviour and sophisticated evasions of justice and of the shootings, stabbings and poisonings in a primitive setting. Lewis's use of anecdote and his matter-of-fact descriptive tone establishes its own authenticity despite the grotesque nature of some of his material. The book has two epilogues - one by Lewis, one by a journalist expert on the Mafia - which commemorate more recent killings, and outline current developments like the growth of the drugs industry, which will ensure that *The Honoured Society* remains an important source of background material for some time.

ARNOLD PALMER. *Movable Feast*. 153pp. Oxford University Press. £2.95, 0 19 285141 1. Arnold Palmer's amissly discursive little volume, first published in 1952 and reviewed in the TLS of November 14 that year, is amply subtitled "a reconnaissance of the origins and consequences of fluctuations in meal-times, with special attention to the Introduction of Luncheon and Afternoon Tea". It is compiled from a postwar standpoint (but with much retrospection to country-house and clubland life) based on literary evidence from

about 1780 onwards (again with much retrospection), and remains enjoyably quirky and inconclusive. David Pocock, of Mass-Observation, has provided a 24-page introduction. While being careful not to criticize Palmer for not having written a different sort of book, Mr Pocock's evidences of changing eating habits draw on a broader and more clearly specified social group, and come up to date with talk of musli and take-aways. Neither author takes much account of visual evidence, whether in pictures of silverware, and there is much more to this intriguing subject than Palmer's "reconnaissance" admits.

Travel

KEVIN ANDREWS. *The Flight of Ikaros: Travels in Greece during a civil war*. 231pp. Penguin. £2.95, 0 14 009531 4. Kevin Andrews's book, first published in 1959 (and reviewed in the TLS of March 6 that year), has worn well. It has been substantially revised for the paperback edition but the spirit remains fresh and imaginative. It is not, he says, an autobiography. It is first and foremost a record of his encounters in Greece in 1947-51, interspersed with historical notes. But it also charts his own emergence from student romanticism to mature philhellenism. He quickly mastered not only the language but the sociology of unsophisticated communities, both rural and urban - their pride, their generosity, their suspicions, their preference for gestures and rhetoric over reasoning, their belief that all Greece's misfortunes are due to somebody else ("they set us to killing one another"; "what are you Americans up to?"). Although the book is subtitled *Travels in Greece during a civil war*, Mr Andrews witnessed the war only from one side. Until 1950 he could not travel outside the limited areas controlled by the government. He perhaps underestimated how different Greek society would have appeared to him on the other side of the mountains. Nevertheless, his sympathies are firmly on the losing side, thus anticipating today's fashionable liberalism by a quarter of a century.

Reviewers: Alan Bell, Humphrey Carpenter, Lindsay Duguid, Toby Filton, David Proffitt, C. M. Woodhouse.

Also in paperback

GEORGEY BERRY. *Looking for Diluvium: The search for a lost civilization*. 410pp. Penguin. £3.95, 0 14 009534 9. First published in 1970. Reviewed in the TLS of January 1, 1971.

JOSEPH BONANNO. *A Man of Honour: The autobiography of a Godfather*. 416pp. Unwin. £3.95, 0 04 920098. First published 1983. Reviewed in the TLS of September 23 that year.

WILLIAM J. BOUWMA. *Venice and the Defence of Republican Liberty: Renaissance values in the age of the Counter-Reformation*. 670pp. University of California Press. £9.95, 0 520 0522 8. First published in 1968. Reviewed in the TLS of July 2, 1970.

J. A. CROOK. *Law and Life of Rome*. 349pp. Thames and Hudson. £6.95, 0 500 2734 X. First published in 1967. Reviewed in the TLS of September 28 that year.

T. F. EVANS. (Editor). *Shaw: The critical heritage*. 422pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £8.95, 0 7102 0396 9. First published in 1976. Reviewed in the TLS of May 28 that year.

R. J. W. EVANS. *Rudolf II and his World: A study in Habsburg history 1576-1612*. 323pp. Oxford University Press. £9.95, 0 19 81961 X. First published in 1973. Reviewed in the TLS of April 27 that year.

PETER FAULNER. (Editor). *William Morris: The critical heritage*. 465pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £8.95, 0 7102 0393 4. First published in 1973. Reviewed in the TLS of June 22 that year.

GAVIN MAXWELL. *Horpoor at a Venture*. 221pp. Penguin. £2.95, 0 14 009897 9. First published in 1952. Reviewed in the TLS of June 13 that year.

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Ted Hughes: A bibliography 1946-1980 by Keith Sagar and Stephan Tabor (260pp. Mansell. £21.50, 0 7201 1654 6) has been awarded the Library Association's Besterman Medal for 1983, jointly with Bernard Adams's *London Illustrated, 1604-1851: A survey and index to topographical books and their plates* (published by the Library Association and reviewed in the TLS, November 25, 1983).

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AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

J. E. J. Attham is a Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.
Sarat Bradford's *Princess Grace* was published earlier this year.
Samuel Brittan's *Role and Limits of Government: Essays in political economy* was published in 1983.
Craig Brown's *The Marsh Marlowe Letters* was published recently.
Anthony Burgess's most recent novel is *Enderby's Dark Lady*, 1984.
Angus Calder is co-editor, with Dorothy Sheridan, of *Speak for Yourself: A Mass-Observation anthology 1937-69*, 1983.
Lord Corser's *The Seven Ages of the British Army* was published earlier this year.
Jim Crace is a feature writer with the *Sunday Telegraph Magazine*.
Calma Craig is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Edinburgh.
Jonathan Crowther is the Executive Editor of the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*.
Sir David Fraser is the editor of *The Christian Watt Papers*, 1983.
Timothy Garton Ash's *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity 1980-82* was published in 1983.
Bryan Hahnworth is a Fellow of New College, Oxford.
J. E. S. Hayward's *The State and the Market Economy* will be published shortly.
John Hope Mason's *The Indispensable Rousseau* was published in 1979.
Robert Irwin's *History of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria* will be published next year.
Ann Jefferson is the author of *The Nouveau Roman and the Poetics of Fiction*, 1981.
Colin Jones is the author of *Chority and "bienfaisance": The treatment of the poor in the Montpellier region, 1740-1815*, 1982.
John Keegan's *Six Armies in Normandy* was published in 1982.
Hugh Lloyd-Jones is Regius Professor of Greek at the University of Oxford.
Robert Martin is Professor of Anthropology at University College London.
Kenneth Minogue's *Allen Powers: The pure theory of ideology* will be published shortly.
Michael Neve is a lecturer in the History of Medicine at University College London.
Dennis Nineham is Professor of Theology at the University of Bristol.
Patrick O'Connor works for *Harpers and Queen*.
J. G. A. Pocock is a director of the Folger Center for the History of British Political Thought.
Peter Porter's new volume, *Fast Forward*, will be reviewed shortly in the TLS.
Peter Reading's new book of poems, *C*, will be reviewed shortly in the TLS.
Colin A. Ross is the author of *Deep Space*, 1982.
Sir Steven Runciman's books include *The Byzantine Theocracy*, 1977.
Bruce Smith's first collection of poems, *The Common Wages*, was published last year.
John Stokes is a lecturer in English at the University of Warwick.
Eugen W. is Professor of Modern European History at the University of California, Los Angeles.
John Whale is Head of Religious Programmes for BBC Television.
Arnold Whittall's most recent book is *The Music of Britten and Tippett: Studies in themes and techniques*, 1982.
Phyllis Whitcomb's most recent book is *A Green Girl: An autobiographical study of school and work in the 1930s*, 1983.
R. S. Woodhouse is the author of *Locke's Philosophy of Science and Knowledge: A consideration of some aspects of An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, 1971.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 206
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than January 18. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.
Entries, marked "Author, Author 206" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on January 25.
1 He loved the poor as I never yet saw any one else do, with an earnest desire to make them happy. - What signifies, says some one, giving helpence to common beggars? they only lay it out in gin or tobacco. "And why should they be denied such sweeteners of their existence (says Johnson)? it is surely very savage to refuse them every possible avenue to pleasure, reckoned too coarse for our own acceptance."
2 When you are employed, which is to say when you are underfed, harassed, bored and miserable, you don't want to eat dull wholesome food. You want something a little bit "tasty". There is always some cheaply pleasant thing to tempt you.
3 "I can't let that moral bullying pass uncriticized. The paid social workers are here to administer the society's funds for the benefit of the old people. It's nothing to do with her whether old Mrs T. chooses to spend the little she gets on gin so long as the old creature doesn't let herself go downhill."
Competition No 202
Winner: Philip Hobbbaum
Answers:
1 When I was a child I went to the two penny travelling theatre to see *Hamlet*. The Ghost had on a helmet and a breastplate. I sat in pale transport. "Amblet, Amblet, I am thy father's ghost."
Then came a voice from the dark, silent audience, like a cynical knife to my fond soul:
"Why the arena, I can tell thy voice."
D. H. Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy*, chapter 3.
2 The late king of the country not only appeared to have been troubled with a cough at the time of his decease, but to have taken it with him to the tomb, and to have brought it back. The royal phantom also carried a ghostly manuscript round its truncheon, to which it had the appearance of occasionally refer-

ring, and that, too, with an air of an
tendency to lose the place of reference at
suggestive of a state of mortality. It
conceive, which led to the Shade's being
the gallery to "turn over" - a recon
which it took extremely ill.
Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, ch.
3 "If you are not afraid of the devil, I am, but to be sure it is natural to be afraid of things, though I know there is nothing to be afraid of. It was the ghost that surprised me; it should have known that to have been in a strange dress: but when I saw the king frightened himself, it was that which frightened me."
Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*, book 14, ch. 4.
INFORMATION, PLEASE
John Mair (1913-42): word from a his relative with a view to finding his o holder.
Julian Symons.
Gron House, 330 Dover Road, Watn Kent.
George Morion, genre and poi. active between 1879 and 1904; where his portrait of George Woodstock painter, etcher and writer (1854-1928) bit at the Royal Society of Portrait in 1896; also the portrait of George's brother, Louis Rhead (1858-1926); for and exhibition.
B. S. G. Bumpus.
39 Rudall Crescent, London NW3 1RR.
Henry D. Thoreau: whereabouts of his or from Thoreau; also of other Thoreau scripts, particularly those tipped into the volume of the 800 sets of the Manuscript Deluxe Walden Editions of 1906 (*The W of Henry David Thoreau*, ed Bradford and Francis H. Allen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906)); from owners who have already been approached by *The Writing Henry D. Thoreau* editorial project of professor Waller Harding.
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Department of English, University of California Santa Barbara, CA 93106, USA.

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